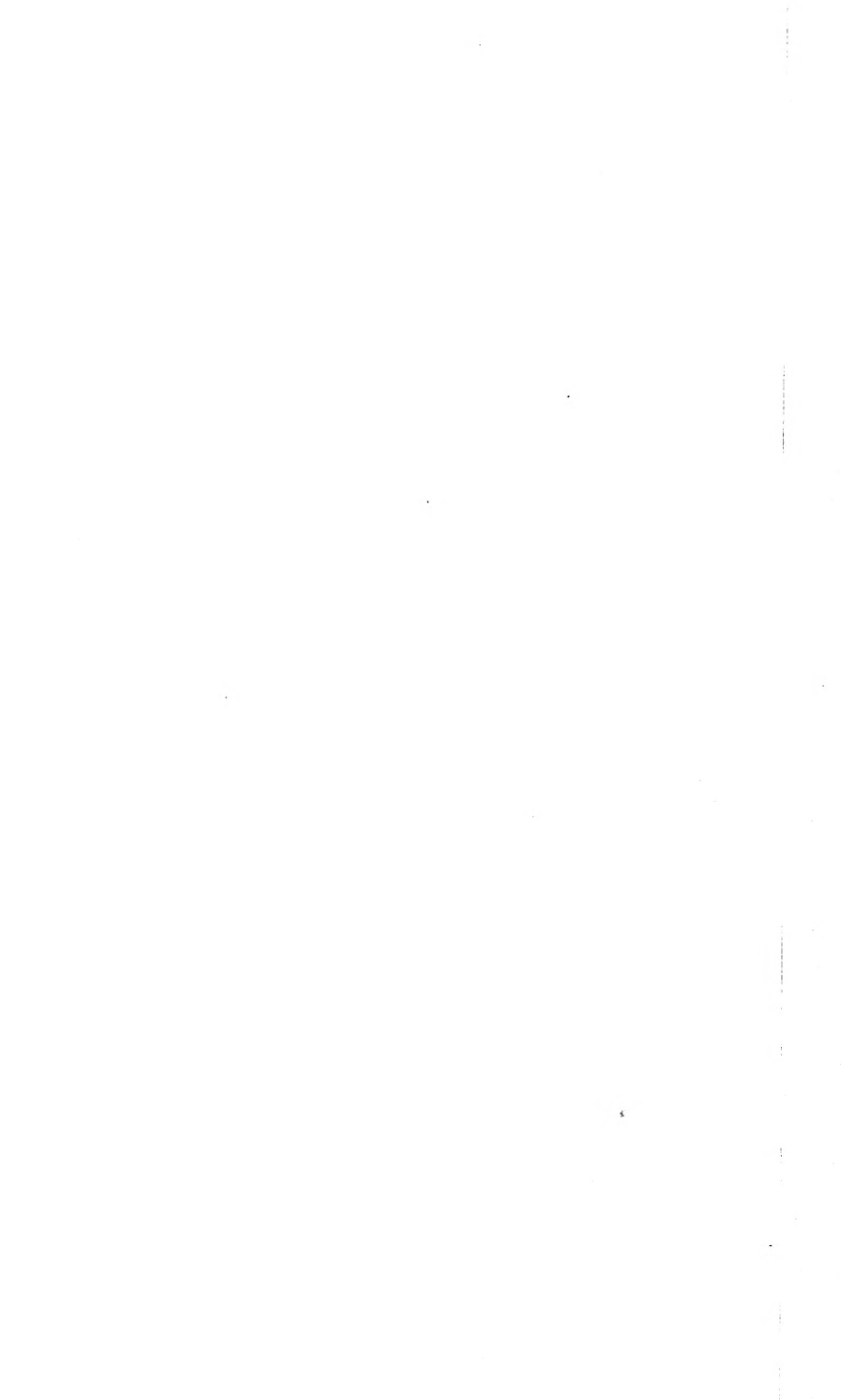


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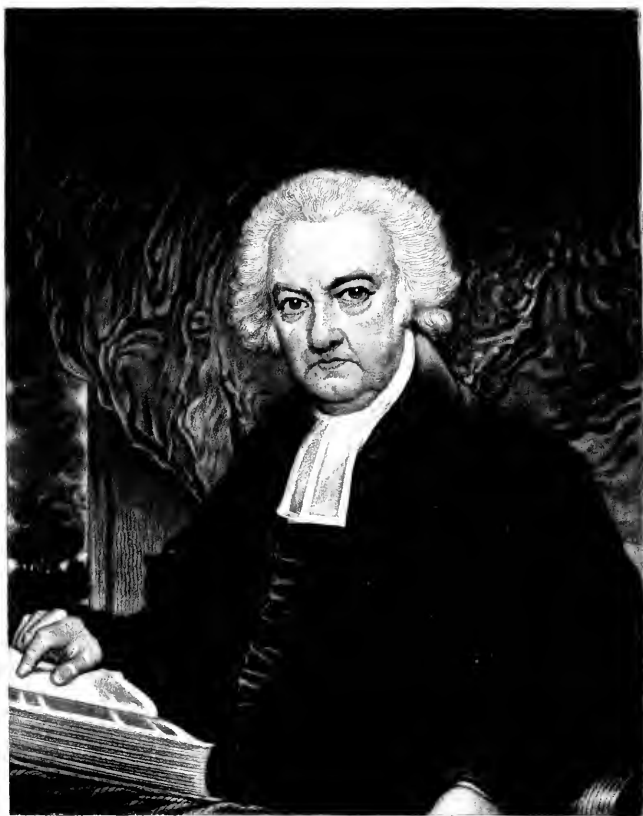












Portrait of Mr. C.

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THE HISTORY OF THE CITY OF LONDON.

— Died June 13, 1831.

Age 81

# Aged Christian's Companion :

A VARIETY OF ESSAYS,

Improvement, Consolation, and Encouragement of Persons  
Advanced in Life.

REV. JOHN STANFORD, D. D.

WITH A MEMOIR OF THE AUTHOR.

New York :

1855.





## ADVERTISEMENT TO THE SECOND EDITION.

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THIS work originally appeared in 1829, when its venerable author had nearly reached the term of fourscore years. The design of it was altogether a novel one, and believed to be the first attempt to provide a book adapted especially for those who were entering the vale of years. It was received with an extraordinary degree of favor and approbation by both clergy and laity. The author's life was spared long enough to be assured that this, the closing effort of his pen, would accomplish the benevolent object he had in view. He was even urged and encouraged to undertake the preparation of materials for a *seconda* volume, in which he had made some progress, when his labors upon earth were suddenly arrested by the hand of death. Such of these pieces as were found amongst his papers in a finished state are added to the present edition.

The publishers have great pleasure in prefixing to this volume a most interesting sketch of the life and labors of Dr. Stanford, prepared at their solicitation by the Rev. Dr. Upfold. No man could be better fitted for the task; Dr. Upfold having been for more than fourteen years, while Rector successively of St. Luke's and St. Thomas's Churches in this City, most intimately acquainted with the venerable deceased; enjoying the privilege of the closest intercourse with him, and aiding him in all his Howard-like labors of love. This beautiful sketch they doubt not will be read with pleasure and profit by all, and especially by his surviving friends.

Most earnestly do the publishers hope that the blessing of Almighty God may accompany this volume and render it indeed a means of edification and consolation to many an aged reader: that the venerable author of it, though dead, may still speak through its pages the words of wisdom and holiness which were the occupation and delight of his life while here upon earth.



# A BRIEF SKETCH

OF

## THE LIFE

OF THE

REV. JOHN STANFORD, D. D.

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It is the expressive commendation of one of the early heralds of the cross, as eminent for compassionate kindness of heart, and deeds of charity and mercy, as for fidelity and zeal in his Master's service, that "he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost, and of faith." The goodness so emphatically ascribed to him, is elsewhere particularly indicated, by the significant surname bestowed upon him at his conversion—"Barnabas," or "the Son of Consolation." It was a combination of active graces and virtues rarely equalled; and of which, in modern days, we meet with only here and there an approximating example

Yet there are some instances, and brilliant instances too, rising like stars of promise and hope, amid the general selfish gloom; shedding a mild, benignant radiance on their day and generation, and redeeming in degree, the callousness and indifference to human want and woe, which so extensively prevails.

Such an instance, in all essential features of resemblance, it may with truth be said, was exhibited in the pious life, the characteristic beneficence, and the charitable labors of the late venerable author of the discourses contained in this volume. From early youth to ad-

vanced age, particularly in the official employment to which a large portion of his long and active life was devoted, he was truly "a Son of Consolation" to thousands of the sick and suffering poor, and of the victims of vice and crime, to whom he preached "the gospel of the grace of God;" while in his faithful ministrations among these classes of his fellow-creatures, he signally displayed the tender sympathy, the compassionate kindness, and the unwearied practical charity, which characterized the goodness, for which the holy apostle is commended. At the same time, the other terms of the commendation, "full of the Holy Ghost, and of faith," express with truthfulness, the incentive of his pious zeal, the moving and sustaining principle of his arduous labors, and the secret of his success.

It is not, however, to indulge in elaborate eulogy of this eminently "good man," but to delineate the leading features of his character, and exhibit some of the prominent instances of his devotedness in the cause of suffering humanity, that this brief sketch of his life and labors, is attempted. The aim of the writer, who was honored for several years with his friendship, and was occasionally associated with him in some of his official duties, will chiefly be, to present him in the position which drew upon him so large a share of popular attention and respect, and in which, by continuous works of the purest charity and mercy, he won the merited distinction of a practical philanthropist, and a public benefactor. While, therefore, his course through an unusually protracted life, is succinctly traced and described, prominence will be given to that period when he occupied the important, responsible, useful, yet comparatively humble field of labor, the Chaplaincy of the Public Institutions of the City of New-York; and to his efforts to promote the temporal comfort, and spiritual welfare of those of his fellow-creatures, who, fallen into poverty and destitution, were dependent on public charity; or outcasts from society by their crimes, were inmates of the prisons of the metropolis; and who, excluded by their position from the ordinary ministrations of religion, found in him a kind and sympathizing friend, and an assiduous, faithful, and devoted pastor.

The Rev. John Stanford, D. D., was born on the 20th of October, 1754, at Wandsworth, in the County of Surry, in England. At about ten years of age, an uncle, who then manifested an affectionate interest in him, and from whom he had considerable pecuniary expectations,

as his heir-at-law, which were subsequently and somewhat capriciously disappointed; assumed the charge of his education, and placed him at a respectable boarding-school. Here he remained nearly six years, and acquired an education competent for what was then contemplated as his occupation for life, which, by industry, application, and close systematic study, combined with an insatiable thirst for knowledge and fine natural talents, though laboring under many disadvantages, he succeeded in perfecting, until in after life, there were few possessed of more general attainments in literature and science. Naturally of an amiable disposition, and disinclined to vicious habits, goodness, in a certain sense, was developed in him at quite an early age; and while at school, if not decidedly the subject of religious impressions, his mind evinced a strong and prominent religious bent. He feared God from his youth; and from a child was a diligent reader of the Holy Scriptures, which were then, and ever afterwards, his favorite and constant study. Moral and religious composition, too, in which he afterwards excelled, appears to have been an early employment; and in his sixteenth year he wrote, among other essays, two sermons, one on "The Crucifixion," and another on "The Harmony of the Divine Attributes." These were grave subjects for a mere youth to select and discuss, and evince a religious turn, and a habit of religious thought, uncommon at such an immature and usually thoughtless age. And though he remarked of them—"when God had further enlightened my understanding, I destroyed them both"—and as mere compositions, they probably deserved the practical condemnation bestowed upon them, yet they indicate, in their very subjects, a mind more than ordinarily imbued with spiritual things, and the germ of that ardent and manly piety, which afterwards became so conspicuous and so permanent.

It was about this period that he left school, and commenced the study of medicine, which, however, from domestic circumstances and embarrassments, he appears to have soon relinquished. The nature of his employment while it lasted, would necessarily familiarize him in degree with scenes of destitution and suffering; and it is not improbable, that they were to some extent influential in developing the growth of that sympathy with human misery, and that kindness towards the sick poor, which so eminently characterized his subsequent life, and earned for him the honorable and enviable distinction of the poor man's friend.

When only seventeen years of age, the death of his father called him from his incipient professional pursuits, to reside with his widowed mother, and assist her in the care of the family. Here he pursued his studies privately, until circumstances led to their entire abandonment, and turned his attention to another avocation. His religious impressions deepened by his recent bereavement, and by other serious domestic calamities which soon after befel him, ripened gradually under the salutary influence of affliction, into that decided piety which distinguished all his future life. While thus exercised—having been imperfectly instructed, as was too generally the case in his day, in the claims of the Church in England—the Church of his birth and his baptism—to his confidence—thrown very much on his own mental resources, and left to form opinions, and shape out a course for himself—he made acquaintances and contracted intimacies, which ultimately led to his adoption of the distinctive tenets of the religious denomination, with which he was ever afterward connected, and in which, at a very early period of his connection, he was set apart as a preacher. The first and only congregation he ministered stately to in England, he served but a few years, when after much and serious deliberation, and consultation with friends, he decided on emigrating to the United States, as his future home.

In conformity with this decision, Dr. Stanford embarked for this country on the 7th of January, 1786, and after a tempestuous and perilous voyage, arrived at Norfolk, in Virginia, on the 16th of April following; whence, after a residence of only a few months, during which time he was employed in teaching, and was patronized by many of the most respectable families of the place, and treated with great kindness and hospitality, he sailed for New-York. On his arrival at the latter city, in November, 1786, at the instance and with the aid of several respectable gentlemen, to whom he had brought very satisfactory letters of introduction from his native country, he opened an academy and engaged in the instruction of youth, in which he gave great and general satisfaction, and met with signal success. With this employment, he also exercised the ministry he had received; preaching frequently to the then only congregation, in New-York, of the denomination to which he belonged, and as opportunity offered, in other pulpits and in private houses.

The ability and acceptance of Dr. Stanford as a preacher, very soon

attracted attention to him from abroad, and within a year of his settlement in New-York, in 1787, he was invited to a stated pastoral charge, in Providence, Rhode-Island, which, after considerable hesitation, he accepted for one year, and entered on its duties early in the spring of 1788. At the expiration of the period stipulated by himself, during which he had acquired the affectionate confidence of the people of his charge, and of a large circle of personal friends; though earnestly solicited to remain, he yielded to a particular and pressing invitation from New-York, to return to that city and resume his previous employment there, and relinquished the situation. The respect and confidence he had inspired by his talents, piety, and assiduous discharge of his pastoral duties, during his brief residence in Providence, were manifested with many private testimonials to his worth, by his election as a Trustee of Brown University, in that city, and the conferring upon him the honorary degree of Master of Arts, at the annual commencement, September 3d, 1788.\* During his stay in this place, the promptings of his benevolent heart, always alive to the wants of the destitute, and pulsating to the complaint of the sufferer, induced him to devote a large portion of his leisure hours in the promotion of the temporal comfort, and spiritual welfare of the poor. This he did without respect to persons or opinions. "For the better discharge of this duty," says his biographer, "he divided the town into three parts, which enabled him in addition to his unavoidable parochial visitations, to see and converse with nearly all the poor people of the town, about once a month." Thus his ruling passion, or rather his natural kindness and compassion, combined with a conscientious sense of duty was displayed here, as it was subsequently in a more eminent manner, in the progress and to the close of his philanthropic career. And both the employment and its mode were alike strikingly characteristic of the man, who was as distinguished for order and system, as he was for unwearied exertion in doing good.

On the return of Dr. Stanford to New-York—which thenceforth became his residence for life—he re-opened an academy, and engaged with his wonted diligence and fidelity in the instruction of youth. For this employment he was admirably qualified; not only by com-

\* In 1829, (or 1830,) he received an additional literary testimonial, well deserved by his talents, learning, and distinguished public services, in the honorary degree of D. D. from Union College, Schenectady.

petent learning, but by a peculiar faculty of imparting knowledge, that essential requisite in a teacher—great aptness to teach. This, combined with a natural love for children, a deep and affectionate interest in their moral welfare, and a keen insight into young human nature, rendered him an efficient and popular instructor. His academy soon attained deserved celebrity and extensive patronage, and was a source at once of reputation and of emolument. The education of youth, thus became his chief occupation for a period of nearly thirty-six years in all, and until he entered formally on the extensive field of ministerial labor, in which he acquired such honorable distinction, and was so eminently useful; when it was relinquished. Indeed teaching was his principal dependence for a livelihood; for although his scholastic duties were diversified from the beginning, by the exercise of his functions as a preacher, first occasionally, and then statedly, yet his services in that capacity were pretty much gratuitous; and being chiefly bestowed on the poor and destitute, were necessarily without remuneration. Until his appointment as Chaplain of the State Prison in 1813, when a small salary was annexed to the office, it is believed he never received any regular income from his unremitting ministerial services. The account which incidentally and with his characteristic pleasantry, he gives his valued friend the late Gov. Bloomfield, of New-Jersey, of his emoluments from this source for one year, may be taken as a fair specimen of almost every year of the period referred to, while it serves to illustrate better than any elaborate detail, the nature and extent of his disinterested ministry. Writing to this gentleman, under the date of December 2d, 1807, he says—"Last month containing thirty days, I preached twenty-eight sermons. This, you will say, is enough for any man: but you must know, good Sir, I am what some people call a *general lover*; by which you will understand, that although I maintain with firmness the professions of what I believe to be the will of my God in his gospel, yet I devote my public labors to *all* religious denominations without distinction. Indeed, I am the only minister in the city, that can be called, so far, truly *republican*. To me it is a source of peculiar happiness, that I receive the attention of Baptists, Independents, Lutherans, Moravians, and others. I know you will not be angry with me for this liberality. *Semper eadem* (always the same) is my motto, preach where I may; indeed, *it is all of a price*; for although I have preached about three hundred sermons during



*this year, yet I have not received pecuniary compensation sufficient to purchase a pinch of snuff."*

Such were the avocations of Dr. Stanford for a series of years—his ministerial duties extending as his ability and willingness to labor in the sphere he had chosen, became more generally known. He was always ready to preach the word, visit the sick, comfort the mourner, and "deliver," to the extent of his means, "the poor that cried, the fatherless, and him that had none to help him." Each call of duty he cheerfully and promptly met, at whatever personal inconvenience. Every where and to all who sought his services, or whom in his walks about the city he discovered in need of them;—in the Alms House, the Hospital, the Debtor's and the Felon's Prison; in the private abodes of poverty, suffering, or crime; to the bed-side of the sick stranger, or the homeless wanderer, he went "a son of consolation," a messenger of mercy and hope, the sympathizing friend, the spiritual instructor and counsellor, and the dispenser of needed temporal bounty.

During this period of diversified and constant labor, Dr. Stanford experienced a large share of earthly affliction, and many sore trials of his faith and patience. Among these may be mentioned, the bereavement of his estimable wife, to whom he was married soon after he settled in this city. After a brief but happy union of about eight years, she fell a victim to the yellow fever. He himself was simultaneously seized by the same devouring pestilence, and brought down to the very gates of death. Some years after he sustained a serious loss of property, in the destruction by fire, of a building which he had erected at his own cost, for public worship, and in which he had expended all his disposable funds, the savings of his industry and economy. These, with other calamities—for he verified in sorrow and sadness, the poet's apothegm—

"Woes cluster; rare are solitary woes;"

combined with a long continuance of infirm and precarious health, the sequence of the yellow fever, and several severe attacks of illness, did not diminish his zeal, nor interrupt save occasionally and temporarily, his customary avocations and ministrations. His assiduity in works of beneficence and mercy was unremitted. A sufferer himself, he learned to feel more sensibly for those who suffered. His afflictions deepening his piety, increasing his faith, and quickening his sense of

duty, awakened at the same time into greater activity, his wonted sympathy for human want and woe. While they made him a more humble and devout Christian, they served to give additional energy, with new direction and more extensive scope, to his labors as a philanthropist. They may be regarded, indeed, as highly instrumental in the providence of God, not only in preparing him for, but in leading him on, and restraining him to that peculiar, field of usefulness, on which he subsequently entered, and continued to occupy during the remainder of his days.

The burning of his chapel in particular, by which a respectable congregation he had gathered together under his pastoral care, was scattered with little or no prospect of restoration, appeared to be a providential opening and direction to the more general ministrations, which henceforward occupied his attention. One incident connected with that calamitous event, seemed to have made a strong impression on his susceptible mind, as an encouragement to persevere in his ministerial duties, though from necessity, in a different and more extended field. "Although every thing else around was reduced to ashes," says his biographer, "the pulpit remained almost uninjured, and one of the firemen actually stood in it, directing the pipe of the engine, while surrounded by the flames. 'At the moment,' said Mr. Stanford, 'the sight of the preserved pulpit created a sort of impression in my mind, that my public labors in the ministry were not quite ended.'" The general sympathy manifested for him in his misfortune by his fellow citizens, and the tender of a generous contribution as a public testimony of their respect and regard; while it elicited his gratitude, weighed strongly and effectually on his mind, as an intimation that New-York was, and ought to be, the place of his future labors. The gratitude thus awakened grew into a conscientious conviction of duty, which determined very much his subsequent career; restraining him, notwithstanding repeated invitations to a pastoral charge of far higher character and greater emolument, in other and distant places—Savannah, in Georgia, one—to the city where he dwelt as his true position, the field which God designed him to occupy and cultivate, till health and strength should fail.

In 1807, Dr. Stanford may be said to have commenced his acceptable and useful labors, as Chaplain to the Public Institutions of the City of New-York; though without any formal appointment to

that office ; having preached his first discourse in the Alms House, on the invitation of the Superintendent of that asylum for the sick, infirm and aged poor, in the month of March in that year. His ministrations here, as in the other institutions which simultaneously participated them, were for several years only occasional and entirely gratuitous. It was not until 1812-13, that his services were regular and stated ; though they had become quite extensive. In the former year, he was chosen by the Inspectors of the State Prison, under the authority of a recent Act of the Legislature, as the religious instructor of the prisoners, at a very moderate salary ; which appointment was renewed annually, under every change in the Board of Inspectors—such was the confidence inspired by his capacity and fidelity—until the removal of the prison to Sing Sing in 1829. And in 1813 he received his first appointment as the stated Chaplain of the Alms House and the City Hospital, from a society established about that time, to secure and sustain the ministrations of religion in these Institutions. In this office the Rev. Ezra Styles Ely, was associated with him ; but after a few months, he relinquished the employment, and Dr. Stanford became and continued, until disabled by advanced age and infirmities, the sole Chaplain.

The nature and extent of the duties connected with these and similar engagements, in other public and charitable institutions, into which he had entered about this period, were such as required his whole time and attention ; and to enable him to discharge them satisfactorily, he discontinued his Academy, and devoted himself exclusively to his ministerial employments. And now began that brilliant career of benevolence, and those unwearied labors of love, which ended only with life. His spiritual charge embraced the State Prison, the Orphan Asylum, the Alms House, the Bridewell, afterwards the Penitentiary, the City Hospital, and Lunatic Asylum, the Debtors' Prison, and on its establishment, the House of Refuge for Juvenile Delinquents. These, all of them, were visited every week, on successive days and at different hours, and many of them twice and thrice, as occasion required ; and at every stated visit, a discourse was delivered, with devotional exercises. In all of them the sick received particular attention, while the well were admonished, encouraged, comforted, and instructed personally, as circumstances indicated. Much time was devoted also to the examination of the schools, organized in those of them in which schools were practicable, or promised to be beneficial.

It is, however, impracticable in a sketch like this, to enter into any detail of the numerous and various labors of Dr. Stanford, in the extensive and peculiar pastoral charge he had now assumed. Nor is it necessary. A sufficient and in some respects, a better estimate of the nature and value of his services may be formed, by contemplating him at work in some of the prominent scenes of his official employment, engaged in the actual discharge of his diversified duties.

The State Prison, at Greenwich Village, was, in his estimation, an important part of his pastoral charge, requiring, for many reasons, particular care and attention. It was indeed a field abounding in peculiar difficulties, and calling for great prudence and skill in its cultivation. Persons were collected here of every grade of crime, and of every variety of character and disposition, and under circumstances particularly unfavorable to the developement of spiritual fruitfulness. They formed a sort of social community, with feelings and sympathies peculiar to themselves; and bound together by a common sense of supposed wrong received from the world without, were morbidly sensitive, suspicious, and jealous, and very impatient of admonition and reproof. Some were utterly hardened, and almost all careless and indifferent to divine truth, if not actual unbelievers and scoffers. Some were truly contrite, while others in expectation of personal advantage from executive clemency, were mere hypocritical pretenders. Many, perhaps most, were intelligent and capable of moral improvement; while some were grossly ignorant and incurably stolid. The moral and religious instruction of a body of men so constituted, demanded, in addition to ardent zeal, a sound discriminating judgment, an intimate knowledge of men, and a penetration of purpose and motive, which no artifice could deceive, combined with a manifest sympathy for their misery, a conciliating spirit and kind affectionate manner, and the careful avoidance of all harshness and severity of denunciation, of all upbraiding and railing accusations, in admonition, remonstrance, and reproof. These several qualifications, with the intellectual ability and attainments which such a field of labor demanded, were possessed by Dr. Stanford in an eminent degree, and were brought to bear on those subjects of his pastoral charge with great and good effect. He moved among the unhappy criminals as a friend and father, deeply interested in their welfare, ready to interpose his kind offices in alleviating as far as possible the

rigor of their imprisonment, and solicitous for and ever active in promoting their spiritual good. In this way he succeeded in inspiring their respect and confidence, nay their veneration and affection. So entire and commanding was his influence with them, and his moral control over them, that on an occasion of a formidable revolt, when the authority of the officers, supported by the armed guard of the prison and a strong additional military force from the city, continued to be set at defiance, he fearlessly penetrated into the midst of the exasperated convicts, and by his presence and remonstrance almost instantly induced them to give up their deadly purpose, and thus quelled the insurrection.

The duties of Dr. Stanford at the State Prison, consisted, in addition to public worship twice on the Lord's Day, personally or by substitute, in a stated visitation on other appointed days of the week, of the sick in the hospital of the prison; when in addition to conversation and prayer with individuals, he usually delivered a discourse in the hearing of all. With this he connected the supervision of the schools, established at his suggestion, for the uneducated prisoners, particularly the young; which were taught by prisoners competent to the duty, at regular hours, chiefly in the long winter evenings after the cessation of labor, which at that season was early. Here he might be seen after a visitation of the sick for several consecutive hours, going from school to school, examining the progress of the pupils, commending the studious, reproving the idle, overlooking the management, making useful suggestions, and sometimes assisting in the business of instruction. His preaching in this place, particularly on the Lord's Day, was a matter of no little solicitude. He was accustomed to make very careful preparation for it; or as he used pleasantly to say, he "felt it necessary to lay himself out and provide himself with the best, for his Greenwich Congregation." And it was indeed very requisite, for some of them were well educated, most of them intelligent, shrewd, sensible, thinking men; and all capriciously critical, who felt themselves insulted by crude, ill digested harangues, and were not backward in expressing their displeasure in a way sufficiently significant and not a little annoying. It was his practice, therefore, to study the discourses designed for these somewhat fastidious hearers, with particular care; adapting his subject to their known necessities and capacities, and in a degree to their peculiar circumstances,

yet in a general way, without any direct or pointed allusion to their unfortunate condition, which they exceedingly disliked, manifesting very significantly their displeasure, when, as was sometimes the case, it was done by occasional preachers. He addressed them not as convicts, but as fellow creatures and fellow sinners, in a spirit of mild persuasion, not in severe, unmeasured, indiscriminate denunciation. He "*reasoned* with them of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come," seeking rather to convince than terrify, aiming to inform their understanding, while he appealed with all earnestness, fidelity, and pointedness of admonition and reproof, to their hearts and consciences. He was always heard, therefore, with respectful attention, even by the most hardened; and by very many with affecting interest, productive of deep and lasting impressions. All knew his singleness of purpose, his sympathizing kindness, his sincere interest in their spiritual welfare. They recognized his authority to warn, admonish, and reprove, and they listened with becoming attention, were respectful and orderly, even if unaffected and unimpressed.

This was Dr. Stanford's wise and judicious course in all his intercourse with this unfortunate class of his fellow beings, here, and in the other prisons which participated his services. And it was productive of the best effects; the means under God, of turning many of these victims of vice and crime from the error of their ways, and leading them in true penitence, and in the exercise of a living faith, to the compassionate Saviour of sinners, as their confidence in life and hope in death. Several striking instances of the kind are given from his diary, by his biographer; and many more there were, known only to God, which the last great day will disclose, it may well be believed, as his "*joy and crown of rejoicing.*"

The Bridewell or City Prison, with the Debtor's Prison, and subsequently, when built, the Penitentiary on Blackwell's Island, received a large share of Dr. Stanford's faithful pastoral care. In the former particularly, his duties were a severe trial of his faith and patience; duties from which most men would have often shrunk, for at times they were attended with exposure to serious peril, from the contagious diseases which were so frequently rife within its crowded and loathsome apartments. Here, notwithstanding, he persevered in the regular discharge of the spiritual functions he had undertaken, undaunted by danger, and unwearied by much and constant discouragement from

the hopeless wickedness, and the coarse unbirthing profligacy of the inmates, composed of the lowest sorts of the vicious and criminal of a great commercial metropolis. He never failed in this receptacle of wretchedness, in any labor of love; displaying here the same tender sympathy for human want and woe; the same affectionate concern for immortal souls, as elsewhere; addressing these victims of vice and crime, personally and collectively, in all faithful warning, admonition, expostulation, and reproof; and proclaiming to such as would hear and receive, the omnipotent and abounding grace, and "unsearchable riches of Christ."

It was in the discharge of his functions in this place, that the painful and responsible duty was frequently imposed upon him, of visiting criminals under sentence of death. And it was in these cases that his intimate knowledge of the human heart and its various deceptions, and his sound discriminating judgment, were signally and effectually brought into play, tempering his kindness and sympathy with a proper distrust, and enabling him to counteract the self-delusion, which men in such circumstances are apt to indulge; and in which they are often encouraged by inexperienced and injudicious spiritual advisers, and lead them to a proper sense of themselves, and their crime, and to a right and salutary preparation for their approaching doom. He was never deceived by professions which deceived others, and so far as was in his power, he never allowed the unhappy objects of his spiritual care, to deceive themselves. He was tender as the case required, but pointed, close in his investigation of the conscience, and firm and unyielding in remonstrance, when he discovered any indication of self-delusion, or any attempt to deceive others. In some instances he had grounds of more than humble hope, but in many, nay most instances, after the most sedulous and faithful endeavors, continued up to the very place and moment of the execution of their sentence, to guide them to the only sure object of hope; he expressed himself as having cause for serious doubts, if not alarming fears, of a happy result.

The City Hospital, next to the Prisons, was a prominent, as it was one of the earliest, and it is believed, the latest scenes of Dr. Stanford's regular labor. His principal duty here, was visiting the sick, conversing and praying with them at the bed-side. His visitation was restricted to particular days, as often, however, as three or four times

every week ; but he was frequently summoned at other times, sometimes in the dead of night. It was a work of mercy which he never declined, when it was possible to perform it. On his regular days, after visiting such of the sick as most needed his services, he entered one or other of the wards in succession, according to a general arrangement of the Superintendent ; and after devotional exercises, preached a discourse in the hearing of all who were in the ward, and as many more as could be conveniently assembled there. Many interesting cases met with here, all evincing the good done by his faithful ministrations, and the unrivalled skill with which it was done, are recorded in his diary. An opportunity was afforded, more than almost any where else, for the exercise of his characteristic kindness of heart, in connection with his accurate knowledge of men, and his almost intuitive perception of character. He seemed to read at once the state of mind of the individual, whose conscience it was his province to probe, and whose spiritual sensibilities it was his aim to awaken. Here also his controversial knowledge and power, though himself no controversialist, and avoiding controversy as much as possible, were frequently called forth, in combating the objections of avowed infidelity or secret scepticism. And this he frequently did effectually, by some simple pithy epigrammatic remark, for which he was noted ; or, knowing their strength and how to assail it, often by well timed and pointed question, would expose their ignorance and absurdity. Many of this description of character, were found among the inmates of this asylum, with many others, careless and indifferent to the concerns of religion, with many also, who had been religiously educated, but had long lived a thoughtless life, and had their early religious impressions revived on the sick bed on which they were now laid. To all of these, he ministered needful and appropriate instruction ; and though amid much and painful discouragement, yet with a good degree of success, and many instances in which there was an abundance of promise and hope.

As a part of his official duties at the Hospital, Dr. Stanford was accustomed to extend his visits to the Lunatic Asylum, an adjoining building, and under the same general superintendence with the other. In the course of his attendance, he suggested the holding of an occasional public religious service in the Asylum, as in the wards of the Hospital itself. This was at first objected to by the Physicians, as



too exciting, and therefore injurious. He at length obtained permission to make the experiment, and made it with such happy results, that no farther objection was interposed, and it became a regular duty. Instead of unduly exciting the afflicted inmates, as was at first apprehended, it proved eminently soothing and tranquilizing. It seemed to call forth forgotten ideas, and revive long dormant sensibilities, of a pleasing and salutary nature. The patients felt the holy calm of devotion, and it proved a powerful auxiliary to the curative means employed. They looked forward with interest to the stated visit of the Chaplain, as to something that shed a brightness over their gloomy path. It was a day of comparative gladness, in their melancholy and monotonous life; and as a sanitary measure, it was productive of the happiest effects. The problem was thus resolved, which is now no longer a problem any where; that religion and its services, judiciously employed, is as much as any thing else calculated to

"Minister to a mind diseased;  
Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow;  
Raze out the written troubles of the brain;  
And as a sweet oblivious antidote,  
Cleanse the stuff'd bosom of that perilous stuff,  
Which weighs upon the heart."

With Dr. Stanford's stated services in the City Hospital, began his regular ministrations in the Alms House, which also continued to participate them unto the close of his active and useful life. Here a different scene opened, from any before noticed. Here was in some respects an agreeable change of labor. For here with much of suffering the result of vice, he met with more which proceeded from misfortune; much of honest poverty; indigence mingled with goodness; instances of decided piety of early origin, faithful nurture, and long continuance, tempering present privation and sorrow with Christian humility, patience, and gratitude; with humble faith and holy hope, of the promised compensating heavenly glory. A considerable portion of the inmates, were aged men and women who had seen better days, intelligent and educated persons, and many of them eminently and sincerely religious. These drew forth his warmest sympathy, and received his sedulous attention. He spent much time in personal conversation with them, encouraging and comforting them, strengthen

ing them in their pious purposes, and sustaining their faith and hope. To these he was indeed "a son of consolation," their spiritual counsellor, their true and faithful friend—a messenger "of grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ." With these were mingled others, less attractive, but not the less participating his kindness, compassion, and faithful services: receiving, because requiring, warning, admonition, reproof, in awakening their dormant moral sensibilities, and bringing them to a proper sense of their guilt and sinfulness. Among others, there were numerous children; some in helpless infancy, some in the budding of earliest youth, some orphans, and all destitute, and dependent on public charity for everything, food, raiment, shelter, and education. For these he instituted schools, employing as teachers, some competent persons among the paupers, both men and women, and undertaking himself their general management and supervision. His duties here, as elsewhere, were always accompanied with public devotional exercises and the preaching of the word. It was, indeed, a sufficient charge of itself, and added much to his arduous labors. His visiting day here, from the diversity of objects requiring his careful personal attention, was a day of incessant and exhausting occupation.

The Orphan Asylum, was a favorite field of duty with Dr. Stanford, and received his assiduous attention. His labors here were truly labors of love. For he loved little children with peculiar affection; and besides the deep interest he took generally in the young, the peculiar destitution of the children of this institution, their orphanage combined with their poverty and helplessness, won their way at once to the overflowing kindness and tenderest sympathy of his warm affectionate heart. He felt also, more sensibly than most men, the obligation of his Master's impressive command—"Feed my lambs." These were all strong and powerful incentives to exertion in this field of duty. His services here did not embrace any portion of the Lord's Day—the orphans attending a place of worship in the vicinity. But at each visit, after examining the schools in each department, and visiting the nursery, and conversing and praying with any that were sick, he assembled all the children in one of the school rooms, examined them in their catechism—and with devotional exercises, delivered a sermon adapted to their capacity. He was singularly successful in engaging their attention at such times. They seemed

to listen, even the youngest, with marked interest. And well they might; for here it was that he displayed his admirable tact in the selection of appropriate and striking texts, and his felicitous power of illustration. His language, without degenerating into common place familiarity, was carefully adapted to the comprehension of his little hearers. It was simple, yet chaste and dignified. The great secret of his success in this respect, was his acquaintance with young human nature, and his accurate knowledge of the movements of the youthful heart. The writer was, for a few years, associated with him to a limited extent in some of his duties here, being usually invited to attend at the funerals that occurred, to perform the burial service at the grave, the orphans having a portion of ground gratuitously given for their interment, by the Vestry of Trinity Church, in a burial ground of that parish in the neighborhood of the asylum. The previous services by the venerable Chaplain at the Asylum, on these occasions, were always of deep and affecting solemnity, and the sermon of great appropriateness and impressiveness, evinced in the affecting interest of the children from the beginning to the end, moving them to tears and even to audible sobbing. It was as if a father was addressing his own social circle, bereaved of one of its beloved objects. Both manner and matter were calculated to stir up the deep fountain of feeling in the young and tender heart, and produce strong, salutary, and lasting impressions. And such was doubtless the effect with very many of the interesting objects present.

In a word, at the Orphan Asylum, the characteristic philanthropy of Dr. Stanford, was seen in its loveliest and most attractive features, and in its exercise was crowned with some of its happiest results.

These were the public duties of this "good man," week after week, with no intermission save when sickness prevented, for nearly twenty years. They were years of constant activity in doing good to such as had no other helper, none other who seemed to "care for their souls;" and years of incessant toil of mind and body.

And if the secret of so much and indefatigable labor, much of it entirely gratuitous, and none of it receiving any thing like an adequate pecuniary remuneration; if the secret of this be sought, it is to be found in a great degree, in his ardent, deeply rooted, and exemplary piety. He was a devout Christian, a man of faith and prayer; he feared God with all his heart. He was moved in all he did by a conscientious

sense of duty, as the recipient of unmerited grace, which it behoved him to minister to others, as "a good steward of the manifold grace of God." His piety sprang not from mere feeling and impulse, but from settled principle; and was the result of a conviction of the understanding of the "truth as it is in Jesus," operating steadily and effectually upon the heart and its affections. It was not an alternation of rapture and coldness—not the brawling mountain torrent, always shallow, and frequently dried up; but the placid river, derived from perennial springs, flowing with an uniform current to the ocean, and expanding and deepening as it flowed on.

The piety of Dr. Stanford, not only stimulated his numerous and arduous labors, but it gave them their character, their direction, and their effect. In particular, it gave character and effect to his preaching, for which he was highly and justly esteemed, not only in his peculiar sphere of duty, but every where. For this function indeed, he possessed, in addition to his well known talents, learning, and simple and persuasive eloquence, some peculiar qualifications. He was singularly dignified and commanding in his personal appearance, especially in the pulpit, with a voice of great compass and power. He gave his Master's message with the fire and unction of one whose whole heart was in the work. To awaken the slumbering conscience, and when awakened, direct it to Him who alone giveth it peace, was his great aim; and few preachers of his day were more successful in winning souls to Christ. Like the eminent Jones of Nayland, he was fond of the figurative language of Scripture; which, aided by his skill of adaptation and illustration, rendered his preaching exceedingly interesting, attractive, and edifying. His sermons were always eminently practical. Seldom did he indulge in formal doctrinal discussion. He did not exclude doctrines, technically so called, but touched on them rather incidentally than directly, and as the necessary basis of his preceptive teaching. What his general doctrinal sentiments were, may be gathered from the discourses in this volume, instinct as they are with his own holy life, breathing in every page his devout spirit, and luminous with that sunshine of the soul, which enlightened, comforted, and animated the path of his pilgrimage. This admirable production of a green old age, with the "Domestic Chaplain," a work of his earlier manhood, and highly and deservedly esteemed as a manual of religious instruction for families, fully exhibit the principles of the

faith which influenced and sustained him in life, and irradiated his declining days, and his departing hour with heavenly peace and hope.

Added to the peculiar qualifications of personal appearance, voice, and manner, Dr. Stanford as a preacher was distinguished by a great perspicuity and beautiful simplicity of style, with a ready command and felicitous choice of language, always dignified, yet always intelligible, adapted to the simplest capacity, and attractive to the most refined taste and the highest order of intellect. This, with his affectionate earnestness, indicating the depth and fervor of his piety, the sincerity of his convictions, and the singleness of his purpose and aim, made him the acceptable, impressive, and effective preacher he was—nay, popular, in the true sense of that much perverted and prostituted term :—

“———— a preacher such as Paul,  
 Were he on earth, would hear, approve, and own.  
 \* \* \* \* \* simple, grave, sincere;  
 In doctrine uncorrupt; in language plain,  
 And plain in manner; decent, solemn, chaste,  
 And natural in gesture; much impress'd  
 Himself, as conscious of his awful charge,  
 And anxious mainly that the flock he feeds,  
 May feel it too; affectionate in look  
 And tender in address, as well becomes  
 A messenger of grace to guilty man.”

No one possessed of any degree of moral sensibility, could hear him without pleasure, admiration, and edification; and few, however insensible to spiritual things, or indifferent to the overtures of heavenly grace, could be wholly unmoved by his awakening, touching, persuasive appeals to the heart and the conscience; or fail to be deeply impressed, if not convinced, by his masterly exposition, defence, and enforcement of the truths he taught. He seemed, indeed, in all respects, to meet the poet's pure and high imagining of an Ambassador of Christ; and no one could behold him in the act and attitude of preaching, whether in the ordinary sanctuary of God's house, in the sick ward of the Hospital, or in the gloomy chapel of a prison, without perceiving the truthfulness of the resemblance, and being constrained to exclaim,

"There stands the messenger of truth! there stands  
 The legate of the skies! His theme divine,  
 His office sacred, his credentials clear,  
 By him the violated laws speak out  
 Its thunders; and by him, in strains as sweet  
 As angels use, the Gospel whispers peace.  
 He stabilizes the strong, restores the weak,  
 Reclaims the wanderer, binds the broken heart,  
 And arm'd himself in panoply complete,  
 Of heavenly temper, furnishes with arms  
 Bright as his own, and trains, by every rule  
 Of holy discipline, to glorious war,  
 The sacramental host of God's elect!"

Amid his "abundant labors" in his particular spiritual charge, Dr. Stanford interested himself in various general works of charity and mercy, devoting to them much time, care, and active exertion. His kind compassionate heart, always alive to the claims of suffering humanity, was constantly suggesting plans for the amelioration of the misery and destitution that met his ever watchful eye. He may be said, indeed, to have possessed an ingenuity in doing good. To him, as much as to almost any one else, is the City of New-York indebted for the first suggestion, and the incipient promotion of many of the Public Charitable Institutions, which are its ornament and its glory. At a very early period, the pitiable and helpless condition of the orphan poor, attracted his attention, and enlisted his warmest sympathies; and he may be regarded as the proposer, as well as, from the start, the indefatigable and efficient promoter of that purest of all charities, with which the venerated names of Mrs. Isabella Graham, Mrs. Hoffman, Mrs. Christie deceased, and Mrs. Hamilton, and Mrs. Bethune, still living, are so honorably associated as the founders and liberal benefactors—the Orphan Asylum at Greenwich. Contemporaneously with the establishment of this institution, two other charitable associations, in the promotion of which the same benevolent ladies were engaged,—“The Society for the Assistance of Poor Widows with Small Children,” and “The Society for the Relief of Aged and Indigent Females”—originated in his suggestive philanthropy. His attention was arrested at an early period also, by the peculiar destitution of the deaf and dumb paupers in the alms-house, which he attempted with considerable success to relieve, and which, though unable to pur-

sue it to the extent he desired, he never lost sight of; out of which sprang, through his immediate instrumentality, in after years, the Deaf and Dumb Asylum of the State, on a large and liberal scale—the first meeting for the organization of which, was held in his own house. The “House of Refuge for Juvenile Delinquents,” pronounced by Governor De Witt Clinton, in his annual message to the Legislature, 1826, after it had been in operation two years only, to be “perhaps the best penitentiary institution which had ever been devised by the wit, and established by the beneficence of man;” was of his proposal, and planning; and which, after several years of warm and zealous advocacy, he at length had the gratification of seeing established on a permanent foundation, and in successful operation, more than meeting his most sanguine anticipations. This charity, for a noble charity it is, sprang from his observation of the pitiable condition of youth, imprisoned for first and petty offences, associated with older criminals in the same prison, and the hopelessness of any reformation under such circumstances, nay their positive injury; of which he had a large and painful experience in the State Prison, and in the Penitentiary. The spiritual condition of seamen, moreover, and their moral and religious improvement, was from a very early period, a matter of deep interest to him, and was often revolved in his own mind, and frequently submitted to the consideration and counsel of his friends; and to him, there is evidence found among his papers, belongs the credit of the first distinct proposal of an exclusive place of worship, and exclusive ministrations, to that most neglected class of men. After much and anxious thought, he recommended to the corporation of the city, at least ten years before any other attempt of the kind, to purchase and fit up an old ship, and thus provide a floating chapel for sailors, a separate place of worship adapted to their associations and habits, to which they would be more readily attracted, than to an ordinary church edifice. The Corporation applauded the benevolent design, but felt themselves unauthorized to expend the public funds in its execution; at the same time, they recommended the proposal as a private enterprize to the patronage of the community. In a word, it may be said, that during his long residence in New-York, there was scarcely any one of its numerous public charities, in the establishment of which he was not directly or indirectly concerned, either in suggesting, or sustaining and commending them to a liberal patronage

Wherever he discerned want and misery, destitution and suffering, in any shape or form; there his kind, unselfish, and compassionate heart prompted, his active and ingenuous mind devised, and his efficient and untiring hand carried out, as far as practicable, instant and appropriate measures in relief and succor. The position he occupied afforded continual opportunities of seeing human want and woe, in every variety of phase, incident to a populous city, and they were never neglected. His income was limited, and he could do comparatively little from his own pecuniary resources, yet of that little he distributed with liberal hand; and in what he necessarily failed from this, he made up by his personal exertion and influence, with those of greater ability, and with the public generally.\* In so great respect was he held as a wise and practical philanthropist, as well as for his exemplary character, that he could at all times command the co-operation of a large number of the rich and influential of his fellow citizens, in the furtherance of any benevolent plan he might purpose. He enjoyed too extensively, the confidence of the State and Municipal Authorities, who officially and individually entertained for him the highest respect, and were always ready to lend an ear to his suggestions, and aid him in any proposal submitted in his official capacity; nay were accustomed to consult his experience and judgment in relation to the regulation, discipline, and improvement of the several public institutions committed to his spiritual supervision.

Objects of more general benevolence, received at the same time a large share of his attention; in the promotion of which he was associated, as in other works of beneficence and mercy, with a band of public spirited individuals; among whom may be mentioned, because of their intimate and lasting personal friendship, as well as for their mutual zeal in good works, the late Thomas Eddy, of the Society of Friends, the learned Dr. Samuel L. Mitchill, a near neighbor, and the venerable John Pintard, the munificent benefactor of the Library of the General Theological Seminary of the Protestant Episcopal Church. His known philanthropy, with his equally well known

\* Dr. Stanford always kept what he styled "his poor's purse," made up of the savings of his income, from which he drew when proper objects of charity offered. At his decease this purse was found with its appropriate label, in his desk, and its contents, no small sum, appropriated to objects of charity.



ability, assiduity, and zeal, drew him into all the varied attempts, for the amelioration of human misery. And his reputation as the friend of the wretched and the oppressed, was appreciated not only at home, but abroad. Among other instances of the estimation in which he was held, in this respect, at a distance, may be mentioned his election, as early as 1796, as a member of "the Pennsylvania Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery, the Relief of Free Negroes Unlawfully Held in Bondage, and for Improving the Condition of the African Race;" of which Dr. Benjamin Franklin was the first President, and which it is believed, echoed back the first formal response from the United States, to the burning eloquence of Wilberforce, and the zealous efforts of Clarkson, and their associates in Great Britain, in behalf of injured Africa, and in exposure and denunciation of the cruel and infamous traffic in negro slaves.

In the strictly religious charities of his day, Dr. Stanford, moreover, took a warm and lively interest, attending their meetings with great regularity, and affording his judicious counsel, advice and encouragement. His addresses on these occasions were always eloquent and effective, and characterized by great originality of thought. "One of these delivered in his 78th year, before the American Bible Society, will long be remembered," says one who heard it. "On this occasion it seemed as if all the fire and ardor of his youth had been renewed. It was, indeed, his closing and crowning effort; and almost his last public act in the service of his Lord and Master."

In private life, Dr. Stanford was beloved and respected by all who knew him. The young, especially, venerated him, and were delighted and interested with his manner and conversation, which displayed a peculiar fondness, a marked kindness, and a happy adaptation to their capacity, which won their hearts. His deportment and style of dress, were those of a gentleman of the old school; his manner was bland and graceful, mingled with a dignity which commanded respect. In social intercourse, in which he greatly delighted, and for which he found considerable time, amid his multifarious occupations, he was in high degree interesting, agreeable, and instructive. He possessed, indeed, conversational powers of a superior order; always profitable in this respect, never failing to introduce topics of a religious character, yet with such admirable tact and skill, and with such nice discrimi-

nating regard to time, place, and persons, as never to give offence to, or even weary, the gayest and most worldly minded.

Never in the enjoyment of robust health, the declining years of Dr. Stanford, were marked by painful bodily infirmities, particularly the severe neuralgia affection, known as *tic doloieux*. Of this he was relieved to a great extent, a year or so previous to his decease. But other, and permanent diseases, fastened on his aged frame, and at length forced him to retire from all his public duties, and confined him to his house. A few months before his death, the writer, then on a visit to New-York, called to see him. He intimated, with much feeling, what indeed seemed almost evident, that he should never see him any more on this side of the grave. He spoke with calm composure of his probable sudden departure, and expressed himself ready for the summons, come when and how it might. Death was with him a familiar topic of thought and conversation; it had its terrors, but they were tempered by an humble and lively faith, and a reasonable, religious, and holy hope. He felt it to be gain to die; and anticipated the approach of death as a peaceful transition to a life of compensating glory and endless bliss. In this delightful frame of mind he continued, awaiting in faith and patience his coming change, and diligently engaged in preparation for it, with his intellectual faculties in full vigor, and, as the outward man gradually decayed, strengthened daily more and more with God's grace and Holy Spirit in the inner man," until Tuesday, the 14th of January, 1834, about midnight, when he calmly fell asleep in the Lord, full of days and full of hope, in the 81st year of his age.

His funeral took place on the 16th of January, and was followed by a large number of ministers of various religious denominations, a numerous concourse of friends and citizens, and an affecting array of two hundred orphan children of both sexes, mourning their beloved pastor, their friend, their father. The procession moved from his dwelling in Lispernard-street, to the Baptist church in Oliver-street, where the funeral services were performed by the pastor, the Rev Dr. Cone, assisted by the Rev. Drs. Brownlee and Milnor, the last an intimate friend and associate in many works of beneficence and mercy.

Thus lived and thus died, one of the most distinguished and practical philanthropists of modern times—a devout Christian—a devoted minister—a true “son of consolation,” “a good man, and full of the

Holy Ghost and of faith:”—one “abounding in every good word and work,” and pre-eminently useful among a class, or classes of his fellow-creatures, who, but for him, would have had “no man caring for their souls,” little or no opportunity of hearing the gospel of Christ:—one, “whose place,” it is the testimony of an officer of an institution which long participated his services, “has never since been filled, and perhaps never will.” The spiritual counsellor, instructor, and comforter, of the poor, the wretched, and the outcast, his labors were carried on with stern fidelity and unwearied assiduity. for a long period of years, amid scenes of suffering and distress, which few are able to appreciate, and few disposed to encounter. He had a portion of his reward here, in the consciousness of doing good, in the affection, esteem, and veneration of the forlorn and miserable objects to whom he ministered, and in many proofs of usefulness and success, in well-marked instances of wretched outcasts brought through his affectionate and faithful warning and admonition to repentance, reformation, and faith in Christ. He has gone to his full and glorious reward. He rests from his labors, and his works will follow him. The man of God is with his God.

“————— The toils, the cares,  
 The pleadings of thy ministry are o'er:  
 And thou shalt know its triumphs in the day  
 When Christ shall gather his elect; and they  
 Who many turn to righteousness, shine forth  
 With starry lustre, borrowed from the sun  
 Of life and light eternal. On the earth  
 Thine was a holy warfare. With a zeal  
 Which nothing but the Spirit of God could wake,  
 Didst thou extend the knowledge of His name,  
 And preach salvation through atoning blood.  
 And thou art gone, those blessings to enjoy,  
 Which here with mild persuasive eloquence,  
 Thou biddest others seek. With thee all's well;  
 Thy bark has passed the narrow seas of time,  
 And gain'd, well freighted, the eternal shore.  
 Then rest thee from thy labors, man of God!  
 Thy works will follow thee; and in that day,  
 When Christ with all His hosts again shall come,  
 Thy crown, and thy rejoicing, shalt thou see  
 In those, whom thou hast turn'd from ways of death  
 To Him who loved, and lived, and died for sinful men.



## OLD AGE.

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Let others boast how strong they be,  
Nor death nor danger fear;  
We will confess, O Lord, to thee,  
What feeble things we are.

Our life contains a thousand springs,  
And dies if one be gone :  
Strange ! that a harp of thousand strings,  
Should keep in tune so long.

WATTS.

A SMALL share of knowledge, whether of the natural, the vegetable, or the animal parts of creation, will convince us that all things are subject to change, decay, and death. This is eminently true of the life of man. He is born to die. Not that the Almighty takes pleasure in destroying the human fabric, which is the delightful and astonishing work of his hand, but because of man's transgression ; "for by sin came death." This too, is the baneful cause of all the intervening evils and miseries which attend us from the cradle to the grave. Every stage of life has its evils strongly marked ; and each affords sufficient cause for submission and humiliation, while they all should prompt us to supplicate the throne of mercy for

those blessings of grace, which, through an adored Redeemer, can yield support and consolation; for without this source of relief, the whole world is inadequate to afford a remedy. Whatever comments may be made upon the previous stages of human life, it must be confessed, that the closing scenes are of the greatest importance. The bloom of youth, and the strength of manhood, furnish sentiments which are delightful to cherish; but when we enter into the vale of years, the subject most seriously changes, and our contemplations upon it produce a chilling gloom, and give a deeper tone to our feelings. Still the progressive decline in old age forms a necessary and important subject for all who are advancing in years, and especially for the aged Christian. For a good old man to feel, and mark the diversified stages and changes by which his frail body is hastening to the dust, will create no unnecessary pain nor fear, while he keeps his faith fixed upon his exalted Saviour, and cherishes the hope, that heaven shall be his final home. So far from it, he will piously yield to these feelings of decay, as the unpinning of his earthly tabernacle; so that, in due time, his soul may wing its way to the bosom of his God, in endless felicity!

From these considerations I have concluded, that the first paper for the Aged Christian's Companion, should contain a short description of the **PHYSICAL CAUSES OF OLD AGE**. Afterwards, in order to render the subject still more easy to be understood, I shall take a familiar view of its **NATURAL PROGRESS**, which

will be found correct in its application, more or less, to the feelings of every aged person.

It must, however, be understood, that this description will not be drawn from what may be called "premature old age;" in which the constitution has been wasted by intemperance, or other vices: for it is well known, that by such means many unhappy persons, of both sexes, have been so reduced in middle life, as to bear the marks of extreme old age. On the contrary, we shall follow nature in her own progress, which is usually exhibited in a protracted life, from fifty to three score years and ten. Certain it is, there requires no violence of disease to hasten the frail body to the dust; the supports of life gradually exhaust themselves, and, like a taper burning down to the socket, will in due time expire. All these changes being under the allotment of the Almighty Arbitrator of life and death, whatever else we know, we may certainly say with Job, "I know that thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living." Happy, therefore, is that person, whether young or old, who, like that venerable man, can form the pious resolution, "All the days of my appointed time will I wait till my change come."

#### THE PHYSICAL CAUSES OF OLD AGE.

In tracing the natural and physical causes which produce decay in old age, we must first direct our attention to the HEART; for it is universally acknow-

ledged, that the heart is the seat of animal life; the first of man that lives, and the last that dies. The heart forms an engine or fountain, propelling the blood in incessant circulation through every artery and vein, replenishing and invigorating as it passes through the whole animal machine. We are, therefore, informed in the ninth chapter of Genesis, and in the twelfth of Deuteronomy, that "the life is in the blood;" and we may truly pronounce it a perpetual motion of God's own making; for, the vital spring, and the whole machine, will continue their operation until the cold hand of death is laid on both. Although the animal system is subject to a great variety of changes during the previous period of its existence, yet in our last days there are changes of a peculiar kind, and all the animal and mental functions of life begin to lose their tone; and the old man may be said, emphatically, to hang his harp upon the willow. In this commencement and process of decay, we observe the heart first to feel the effects of age, its motion is less active, and its energy less competent to send forth the blood on the errand of its circulation. In consequence of which the smaller arteries begin to grow languid, and then stiffen; the larger vessels contract, and of course, they likewise progressively grow rigid, and sometimes form a soft bony texture. From these causes the free circulation of the blood is impeded, and the vessels are less capable of performing their offices, by sending supplies to build up the wasted parts of the body; and hence a gradual debility of the general system is pro-



duced. Besides, that portion of blood which was sent to the lungs, to sustain its vitality and heat, is likewise diminished; consequently the respiration is more difficult, the extreme parts of the body lose their warmth, the muscular system is enfeebled, and the whole frame becomes weak, incapable of balancing itself, and unable to maintain its former activity and labor. To the same cause, of the failure of the heart, must be attributed the *visible appearances* of age. The alteration in the tone of voice, the shaking of the head, the trembling of the hands, the feebleness of the knees, the change of color in the hair and skin, and the wrinkles of the face; these are the common forerunners to the breaking up of life. But these are not all the defects which should be named; for the sensible decay of the organic parts of the body usually affects the nervous system; the senses and the passions, which form the more important rational parts of man, share in the general wreck; and it is obvious that these are the most common forerunners to the breaking up of the powers of man. The memory, and faculty for invention, fade like the leaf in autumn; and in some instances these infirmities have been so great, and they have reduced the power of rationality so low, as to produce a state somewhat like a second childhood. Eventually the blood can no longer feed and nourish the body. The animal powers thereby become exhausted; and, like a taper burnt down to its socket, quiver for the moment, and then expire. The history of old age will, therefore, teach us, that

its appearance varies as presented in different individuals; and perhaps there are very few who can exhibit the like symptoms with each other. But the physical causes are the same in all; the heart fails, and the man dies. And of such a man whose death was not hastened by casualty, or accidental disease, it may be truly said, **HE DIED OF OLD AGE.**

#### **THE SENSIBLE AND VISIBLE PROGRESS OF OLD AGE.**

We will now attempt to describe the symptoms and the progress of old age in a more familiar manner; which, it is presumed, will not fail to be understood by every reader. These symptoms usually commence at about **FIFTY**; and, by a gradual process, terminate at **SEVENTY**; all beyond this is, more or less, decrepitude; or, as the Psalmist calls it, "labor and sorrow." Its first stages are scarcely perceptible, and most generally misunderstood. The person complains of an unusual lassitude or weariness in walking, or when employed in his accustomed labor; which he is disposed to attribute either to his having caught a violent cold, to rheumatic affections, or to any external cause whatever, rather than believe it to be the symptom which leads to old age. The mind, and the faculty of recollecting events, names, persons, and things, begin to falter, and calculations are made with less accuracy and expedition than formerly. Even this defect is frequently placed to the account of too much business on hand, or the want of attention; and

this mental defect will continue to increase, and soon convince him that he is advancing to what Solomon calls "the evil days;" so that his mind resembles a vessel that is cracked, though not destroyed. A difference is frequently perceived in the appetite and relish, and in this case the cook is sometimes blamed. Solid food, which he once could heartily enjoy, must now be exchanged for that of a lighter quality, and more easy of digestion. If not before, there will now commence a sensible alteration in the organ of sight; objects become less visible; reading and writing must be performed by the aid of glasses; and sometimes, in this case also, the optician is blamed, instead of believing that his defective sight should remind him that he is advancing to the evening shades of life, and that the time is hastening when, as the wise man says, "those that look out at the window be darkened." Connected with sight, the sense of hearing frequently becomes dull; sounds are confused, the pleasure of conversation is interrupted, and melody ceases to charm; and thus, "all the daughters of music are brought low" in his estimation. See Ecclesiastes xii. Complaint is made that his days appear shorter, when in reality they are not so, for he cannot perform so much labor as formerly; but the man forgets that he has turned the hill of fifty, and now descends with a quicker step; and although his inclination and ambition may prompt him to execute his plans, and do a full day's work, yet his strength imperceptibly declines; or, as David expresses it, "Thou weakenest

my strength by the way," so that he fails to accomplish his design. In addition to these symptoms of advancing years, the person has frequent occasion to complain of a variety of pains, which produce sensations he never felt before, from which medical aid affords but temporary relief. For, in fact, these aches and pains are as the drawing out of the pins of his fleshly tabernacle, and the cracking of the joints of the animal building, which must eventually fall into the dust of death. These are some of the lessons taught in the school of **FIFTY**; and if we follow the person to that of **SIXTY**, we shall find him still more practically conversant with his growing infirmities. By the time he arrives at **SEVENTY**, he no longer attributes his defects, his pains, and his decay, to imaginary causes, but to the breaking up of nature, and the harbingers of death and the grave.

Low as human nature may sink into infirmity by the pressure of years, still there have been instances when she has made a strong effort to recover herself, and God in his providence has granted a revival, somewhat analogous to a second spring in the yearly autumn. A change of air, diet, exercise, new scenery, or other external enjoyments, have been so far beneficial, as partially to restore the debilitated old man, so as it may be said, he has taken a new lease of his life; or, as **David** in the **103d Psalm** piously acknowledges the restoring hand of his God, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, who redeemeth thy life from destruction, so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's." Still

this renewal is of short duration, and the longest life must end. The body must return to the dust from whence it was taken, and the spirit to God who gave it. Therefore, happy is the man that is ready for his change, and blessed are the dead that die in the Lord.

A few concluding reflections may not be unprofitable.

If the intelligent reader indulges his reflections upon the animal and vegetable parts of creation, he will find them in growth and decay similar to himself. The lion of the forest, the long lived eagle, and the stately oak, which has braved the storm of ages, each of these, especially the oak, will be found to have nearly the same symptoms of decay, not materially different from his own. Besides, look at your own existence, how gradually you advanced from childhood to youth, and from youth to manhood; and now, as gradually descend from manhood to old age, and to decrepitude. These different stages of your life, if viewed with serious attention, will open to your mind subjects which will not fail to excite your gratitude to the Almighty for the length of your days.

Few live to three score years and ten, and at such a time of life, an estimate of human mortality cannot but produce its salutary effects. Learned and intelligent men in all countries, whether by observations made on their own soil and climate, aided by what are called "bills of mortality," or a more general investigation of longevity in other climes, have made various statements upon this interesting subject. On an esti-

mate of ONE THOUSAND human beings, perhaps the following statement may be deemed correct.

1,000

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350 die in their first year,  
500 before their 16th year,  
750 before they reach their 50th year,  
970 before they attain 70 years.

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30

So that thirty out of a *thousand*, or three out of *one hundred*, live to seventy years, which is the Scripture age of man. Psalm xc.

Should you, reader, have attained this full age of seventy, the above statement will excite your humility and gratitude, that out of so many born at your own date, and gone down to their graves, you are permitted still to live. If the Lord has enriched you with his grace, and you claim the humble, yet honorable character of *an old disciple*, the description of the decay of the human body, which you have now read, will create no unnecessary alarm in your breast; it will rather promote your devout meditations on the gradual decay of your own frail body, which must soon return to dust, as the just consequence of sin, and then permit your spirit to pass away to the regions of immortality.

At your advanced age, the indulgence of a few occasional thoughts on the gradual advance and the

certain decay of human life, must afford you grateful feelings towards your Divine Preserver. You gradually ascended from infancy to youth, and from youth to manhood, till you reached the summit of fifty. Now you equally mark the steps of descent to old age, and cannot fail to recollect the animating pleasure of the one contrasted with the feebleness of the other. O! what an interesting subject of contemplation is man to himself, and what obligations would it lay him under to his God and Saviour, did he indulge in suitable reflections.

I cannot conclude without referring you to a very just observation of the apostle, which perfectly corresponds with the subject of this paper. He says, "Death worketh in us." 2 Cor. iv. 12. It is true, for as soon as man lives, death begins his operation, however insensible we may be of it, for we have the materials of decay in our sinful nature. We feel something of this decay when cast upon a sick bed, but much more so in the progressive stages of old age. Well, let death work, and when that work is finished, your work of pain and suffering will also be ended, and exchanged for the glorious work of adoration and praise, in the climes of bliss for evermore.





## THE AGED CHRISTIAN.

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What is a Christian? Draw the curtain back;  
The curtain of obscurity, which hides  
The lovely wand'rer from the public eye;  
And, unembellish'd, let the saint appear  
In all the sweet simplicity of grace.

SWAIN.

THE human family presents an abundant variety of characters, both good and evil, and these are to be found in every state of private and public life. The Christian character, however, combining with it the honor of God, the glory of Christ, and the highest interest of those that possess it, is alike rare and invaluable. For these reasons, an examination of it, as exhibited in old age, cannot but be worthy of serious consideration. The copy, however, must not be selected from the circles of the rich, nor from the humble residence of the poor, much less from any particular religious denomination of Christians. On the contrary, as St. Paul said, "Be ye followers of me, even also as I am of Christ Jesus; and Christ having left us an example, that we should follow his steps;" both these oblige us to draw every pattern of religious character from the Gospel, without the coloring of

party opinions. Certainly every good man ought to be piously disposed to view the features of this important character from an authentic likeness, that thereby he may examine and correct his own, and as near as possible, resemble the original. We all know that the natural and the moral life of man is equally presented to us in the Scriptures, by the several stages of infancy, childhood, youth, manhood, and old age. These are also happily elucidated by the successive seasons of spring, summer, autumn, and winter; so if it be delightful to contemplate the young Christian as in the bloom and vivacity of spring, it can be no less instructive to visit the good old man in his decline, and observe his temper and conduct while enduring the cold stormy winter of his old age.

I. Let us examine the formation of the Christian character, for it is well known that every human disposition is produced according to the quality of the mind, and the principles which actuate it. No man, therefore, would hesitate to pronounce the real Christian to be a living spiritual character, worthy of the blessed Saviour Christ, whose name he bears; for without spiritual life there can be no holy action. It must, therefore, be the extreme of presumption for any man to lay claim to this sacred character, while his principles, temper, and conduct, give testimony that "he is dead in trespasses and sins." No truth is more apparent in the Scriptures, and more consonant with universal fact than this, that as our fallen nature

is "conceived in sin, and shapen in iniquity, so we are alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in us, because of the blindness of our hearts." This shows the necessity of a new life from above, that we may be capable of spiritual action, and walk humbly with God. It is by his Gospel alone that we are instructed how a holy and just God can raise a sinner to newness of life. Christ, the Lord from heaven, having by his obedience to the death of the cross, made his soul an offering for sin, ascended up on high, and sat down upon his throne; he thereby possesses a legal right to communicate the "spirit of life" to the souls of his redeemed, by which they are "born again," and commence that new course of life which faileth not to issue in life everlasting. Now it is the reception of this spiritual life from the Spirit of Christ that forms the Christian; and all who have the spirit of Christ, find them where you may, will gratefully acknowledge, "we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained, that we should walk in them." The possession of this life forms "the new man, the hidden man of the heart," the man renewed in all the parts, passions, and powers of the soul, which are now most solemnly consecrated to the service of God. The UNDERSTANDING is enlightened by the truth as it is in Christ Jesus; the WILL is brought into subjection, and moulded into the will of God; and the AFFECTIONS are so far sanctified, as to flow in the holy channel of "love to the Lord," with all the "mind, heart, strength,

and soul," from the consideration of what he is in himself, the relation which he bears to us in Christ Jesus, as well as of the multiplied favors we daily receive from his hand. Thus, it may easily be perceived, that the law of our first creation, which demands our love and obedience, and which we have so grossly violated, is now restored, not only by Christ our law-fulfiller, but by the new creation, according to the Gospel of the grace of God; so that, instead of the Christian making "void the law through faith," with St. Paul, "he establishes the law." Rom. iii. 31. This is an important consideration in the life of a Christian, and is equally true of his justification and sanctification by Christ the Lord. It cannot be forgotten, that it pleaseth the God of all grace, for the wisest purposes, when he produces this new creation in the soul of man, in order to form the Christian character, to permit "the old man, which is corrupt according to the flesh," still to remain in the same person; and where is the Christian but who more or less has found it so? This produces a continued conflict, "the flesh lusting against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." This internal warfare, more than all external afflictions, shows the Christian more of the depth of the evils which lodge in his heart, and clothes him with humility; it teaches him the importance of an increase of faith, and the value of the promises of God; it teaches him also his constant need and use of Christ,

in the fulness of his grace, and thus leads him more frequently in prayer to his God; and often produces a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better than to dwell in such conflicts upon earth. Read the history and experience of the servants of God recorded in the Old and New Testament, as well as of thousands since in every age, and you will find the same features of character exhibited in them all.

I have been the more explicit in this statement, because of its importance; that the reader may be induced to search the Scriptures, and may attain clearer perceptions on this wonderful work of God in creating the Christian character, and the best satisfaction concerning himself. We certainly must confess, that God is a Sovereign in bestowing his gifts upon any of the guilty race of man; and whether he is pleased to confer the blessing of spiritual life in the bloom of youth, the strength of manhood, or in old age, while it lays the possessor under eternal obligation and praise, he will not fail to say, "The life that I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." Happy is the man that can say, **THIS CHRISTIAN LIFE IS MINE!**

II. We shall often find the old Christian employed in reviewing the diversified scenes of his past life, which has a peculiar effect upon his mind, when he realizes the period when time with him shall be no more. To that person, especially, who has known the

Lord from his youth, this review affords a multitude of subjects, at once calculated to produce humility, and raise the expressive song of gratitude for the goodness and mercy of the Lord, which have followed him all the days of his life. So David was employed. As the result of his contemplations, he has given us a description of the grateful feelings of his heart in the seventy-first Psalm: "Thou art my hope, O Lord God: thou art my trust from my youth. O God, thou hast taught me from my youth: and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works. Now also when I am old and gray-headed, O God, forsake me not; until I have showed thy strength unto this generation, and thy power to every one that is to come." Happy conclusion this, for an aged person, on the review of his former days! But that aged man who has only drank the cup of salvation in his latter days, will have different scenes to review, and they will produce different effects. For recollecting the many years he had lived in ignorance and sin, without God, without Christ, and without hope in this sinful and deluding world, he is astonished at the forbearance and long-suffering of his offended God; while, at the same time, he adores the riches of the gift of grace to him, that such an old sinner should be born again, and that he can now claim the character of a young Christian in his old age. Surprising grace! But the long-tried Christian in the ways of the Lord will, however, occasionally find a vast variety of subjects occurring to his mind, that will engage his reflections,

as though they had happened but as yesterday. He will think of the time and manner of his conversion to God, and of his publicly professing himself to be a disciple of Christ, together with the many privileges and comforts he has enjoyed in the house of his God. The various changes he has witnessed in his own person, station, family, friends, and the country at large ; particularly the events of a gracious Providence, in relation to the increase of the kingdom of Christ ; all these, with numerous other events, some grievous and others joyful, make ample employment for the range of the good old man's mind, while each review leads him still nearer in adoration of his God and Saviour. Should this aged Christian have been in the habit of keeping a DIARY of the particular events of his life, the special exercises of his mind, and the signal instances of God's favor to him, it will be a valuable aid to his frail memory ; he will esteem the little book next to his Bible, and call it a part of his most valuable treasure, because it contains the history of God's mercy to himself. How interesting to find an old Christian thus piously employed in remembering all the way in which the Lord his God has led him so many years through this dreary wilderness, purposely that he might know what was in his heart, prove the sincerity of his love to his God, realize the faithfulness and care of his gracious Redeemer, and be more habitually prepared to pass over the Jordan of death, to inherit the Canaan of everlasting rest !

III. We will next mark the feelings of the aged Christian under the infirmities and afflictions which frequently attend the closing scenes of life. It is not uncommon to find that many endure a greater share of suffering than they had experienced in the days of their strength, and when now less able to support the burden. True, it is recorded, that Moses died at the age of one hundred and twenty, and that his eyes were not dim, nor his natural strength abated. But few indeed are the instances, at any period of time, where persons have been so highly favored by a relief from painful infirmities. In the case of Jacob, whose long life had been exposed to severe disappointments and hardships of an unusual kind, God was pleased to grant him his last seventeen years in the enjoyment of peace and comfort in the land of Goshen. Instances of such indulgence are very rare, and those who enjoy them are under high obligation of gratitude! On the contrary, it is the general history of the aged, that they frequently meet with their severest afflictions at the end of their pilgrimage, and when they most need the cup of consolation. The loss of worldly property, the failure of confidential friends, the visitation of death, which cuts off near and dear relatives, and sometimes deprives him of a much loved grandchild, from whose early promises the aged man expected so much gratification in his last days. There are more parents than David who could tell you of an *Absalom*, a son wicked enough to plunge the dagger of distress into the very bosom of the father who begat him



Under such trials, the animal and mental powers of nature, already made frail by age, must certainly bend very low. But, in addition to these, the influence of Satan's temptations at such gloomy times, are frequently and severely felt, the cloud of unbelief arises, and the sensible presence of God is withdrawn, so that, like Job, the suffering man "goes mourning without the sun." Besides, the old body of sin dies hard, and its corrupt nature and influence is now very sensibly experienced, tending to lead the sufferer from the very God and Saviour he wishes to love and serve. These are a few of the painful afflictions frequently attendant on the aged Christian while taking his last steps out of time into eternity; and it is highly desirable that we should learn what good uses he makes of them. No doubt the disappointments and sorrows of life teach him the uncertainty and vanity of all earthly enjoyments, and give him a better relish for those which are spiritual and divine; while they seldom fail to produce in his bosom a sympathetic tone of feeling for the misfortunes and distresses of his fellow creatures. He is anxious to see the hand of his heavenly Father upon him in every afflictive event of providence, "to be still and know that he is God;" and that he apports all his afflictions in infinite wisdom and love, and thereby he is assisted to cultivate patience and cheerful obedience. The loss of his worldly property serves to prompt him to lay up his best treasure in heaven; and although his friends may either grieve or forsake him, he makes the more use

of that blessed Saviour, who is a faithful "friend that sticketh closer than a brother." When groaning under the weight of his inward imperfections and depravity, frequently exclaiming, "O wretched man that I am ! who shall deliver me from the body of this death ?" the trial not only weans him from his sinful self, but leads him in faith and gratitude to reply, "I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." Confident that when the Lord "hath tried him, he shall come forth as gold," how consoling and refreshing is it to his weary spirit, to believe this promise from his God, "Even to your old age I am he ; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you : I have made, and I will bear ; even I will carry, and will deliver you." Isaiah xlv. 4. Who then but will say, "The aged Christian improves most, and shines the brightest, in the furnace of affliction !"

IV. Let us not forget to examine the VIRTUES of the aged Christian, for our Lord has given us this invariable direction, "By their fruit ye shall know them." The wicked are compared to "grass," but the godly are described as "trees of righteousness, planted by the Lord." Although the trees of the garden, when they have passed their maturity, speedily decay, produce less fruit, and generally lose their flavor ; it is not so with the trees of righteousness, for the Lord in the ninety-second Psalm has promised that "they shall still bring forth fruit in old age ; they shall be fat and flourishing ; to show that the Lord is upright : he is

their rock ; and there is no unrighteousness in him." The Spirit of the Lord, like the vital sap in the root, feeds and enlivens the powers and passions of the soul ; the rain and the dews of God's loving-kindness fall upon his heart, while the rays of the Sun of Righteousness ripen his fruit unto holiness, thereby proving the truth of his word, "From me is thy fruit found." Hosea xiii. 9. Viewing the virtues and good fruit of this old Christian, we cannot but admire the strength of his FAITH in the God of his salvation, and the expressions of his LOVE and GRATITUDE are pleasing to our ears. Although his pains are sometimes severe, yet in PATIENCE he possesses his soul, and he bows with HUMILITY to the will of his God. While this good man believes every part of the truth of Christ to be infinitely precious, and that he is under the most solemn obligation to his God "to hold fast the profession of his faith without wavering," still he possesses CANDOR and Christian LOVE for all those who profess to love and worship the Saviour, though they may differ from him in their modes of expressing it ; believing that the rights of conscience are sacred, and that they also are accountable to God alone, for he delights to see any traits of the image of Jesus in whomsoever they may appear. To all that surround him he is an example of MEEKNESS and KINDNESS, and according to his means, he fails not to extend his CHARITY to the poor and the needy. From the stock of information and experience which he has long been collecting, he is ready to communicate WISDOM with

PRUDENCE and AFFABILITY to all who solicit his advice. Although from his age and infirmities he can have little activity in the business of life, his HONESTY and INTEGRITY are strongly marked in all his dealings. If these good fruits are so estimable in the character of the aged Christian, we cannot but more highly esteem the spirituality of his domestic and public devotions. Morning and evening he delights to unite with his family in offering prayer and thanksgiving at the altar of mercy, which produces a chastening influence upon his temper and conversation through the whole of the day. When his infirmities permit his attendance on the house of his God, such are the pleasures he enjoys, that he calls it his best home upon earth, for there his Saviour grants him his smiles. Impressed with the solemnity of soon passing away to the region of immortality, no sooner does he hear of the conquest of grace and of the increase of the visible kingdom of Christ, whether at home or abroad, than it elevates his soul with exquisite delight! These virtues and good fruits are visible to every beholder; and could we be admitted to his chamber, no doubt we should find him, like David, giving himself unto prayer, mixing faith with the word of his God, girding up the loins of his mind, piously trimming his quivering lamp, and thus waiting the signal of his Lord to call him away to the regions of eternity! This description of the virtues of the aged servant of the Lord, is not too highly wrought, it is what an old Christian should be, and what Christ by his grace has

produced in thousands ; and may the reader pray, and aim, to be like him.

V. Aged as the Christian may be, he is still an **EXPECTANT** while upon earth. Indeed, man universally is a creature of expectation, and is perpetually looking for some good, either to supply his wants, or to gratify his desires. The Christian, especially in his last days, finds the most elevating realities presented to his mind in the Scriptures, warranted by the faithful promises of his God, for the employment of his faith, and the ground of his expectations. As the mouth of a river passing out into the expanse of the ocean, the mind is filled with ideas of its extent and grandeur ! no wonder then that an aged person, having so far arrived at the end of his course, should realize the ocean of eternity, and feel his expectations of a future existence more solemnly excited. Whatever good things, whether temporal or spiritual, a Christian may have received from the Lord, he still can say, "My soul, wait thou only upon God ; for my expectation is from him." Psalm lxii. 5. Let us follow his expectations, and we shall find that they extend to **DEATH**. As to whatever may relate to his temporal concerns, he knows that "the Lord is his Shepherd, he shall not want," and is perfectly satisfied to wait the issue. But he is more earnestly concerned for the sanctification of his soul, to be conformed in holiness and love to the will of his Lord ; and in this, his expectations will not be disappointed, for he is

assured that "the God of peace will sanctify him wholly in spirit, soul, and body, and preserve him blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ; and faithful is he that called him, who also will do it." 1 Thess. v. 23, 24. As to his DEATH, the time when, the place where, and the means by which it shall be produced, all these he leaves to the good will and pleasure of the Lord who hitherto has done, and will continue to do, all things well for him, when he comes to die. Sufficient for his expectation, that his God assures him, "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: for I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour." Isa. xliii. 2, 3. This good old man expects the Lord will so order his departure, that as the water of Jordan divided its course, and made a safe passage for the Israelites to the land of Canaan, so neither will the Lord forsake him in death, but support him by his presence and his care, leaving his troubles like the gathered waters behind him. But his expectations go BEYOND DEATH. Though at death his frail body shall return to the dust, his flesh shall rest in hope for the morning of the resurrection; and his soul, when absent from the body, shall instantly be present with the Lord. In that great day appointed for the consummation of all things, the Christian finally expects that his body and soul shall be re-united, and received to the celestial state of perfect holiness and eternal blessedness, to sing the praises of God and the Lamb for ever and ever! All

these most interesting subjects, which form the substance of the believer's expectation, the aged Christian will assure you are not founded upon his own merit, nor his personal fitness, but wholly upon the grace and faithfulness of God, the perfection of the work of Christ, the operation of the Holy Spirit upon his heart, and the never-failing promises recorded in the Bible. At present, while in the body, he will sum up the whole in the last words of David, "Although my house be not so with God (as I could wish); yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure: for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow." 2 Sam. xxiii. 5.

The foregoing are a few outlines of the character of an aged Christian: the formation of his religious character, his employment in reviewing the events of his long life, and his expressions of feeling under the infirmities and afflictions of age. We have likewise glanced at the virtues which distinguish him from others; and have stated a few of the objects of his expectation of future happiness. It is therefore now necessary to ask, What uses should we make of this picture for ourselves? When an artist has finished a painting, he is solicitous to place it in a position where the light and shades of the piece may be seen to the best advantage; and if this description be pronounced a likeness, or a resemblance, we will attempt to find a place suitable to receive it. Suppose we place it in a FAMILY, it will not be despised by any but

the ungodly. Virtuous relatives and friends will admire the features, while some aged person may wish that he was like him. Introduce it to the light of the world, and let the public eye gaze upon it, certainly it will show the care of God in his providence over man to old age. If you please, present the likeness to the eye of INFIDELITY, if infidelity may have an eye to see. Without question, the long life of a man, exhibiting the virtues of Christianity, is one of the most positive evidences of the authenticity of the Scriptures. THE CHURCH is unquestionably a suitable place in which to exhibit this resemblance also, for there it will be viewed in all its parts, illustrating the grace of the Lord Jesus, which forms the character of the devout Christian. But, if my reader is disposed to call this piece a MINIATURE, I can have no objection to his wearing it in his bosom, for the purpose of correcting his own character, so far as it is drawn according to the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; and to him be ascribed all the glory. Amen.

Internal evidence assures the man  
Who feels it of the pow'r of truth divine;  
And truth divine assures the man who sees  
Its hidden beauties of a place in heav'n.  
But rich experience will produce rich fruit,  
And holy meditations in the heart,  
Nurtur'd, will into holy actions spring,  
Thoughts, words, and actions, in one golden chain  
Together link'd in harmony, and worn  
With the becoming grace, experience adds,  
Is CHRISTIAN beauty, flourish where it may.—SWAIN.



## CONVERSATION

BETWEEN MRS. STEVENSON AND THE WIDOW LEE, ON THE  
DEATH OF HER VENERATED HUSBAND.

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MR. AND MRS. LEE married early, were in easy circumstances, and were favored with a son and two daughters, who were well settled in life. Few enjoyed greater affection for each other than they, or were more highly esteemed for their exemplary piety and godliness, whether in the family, the church, or in the neighborhood in which they lived. Mr. Lee, in the 77th year of his age, was stricken with apoplexy, which speedily terminated in death; and the event produced such keen sensations in the breast of the widow Lee, that her mind became disconsolate. Mrs. Stevenson, a pious lady, made her bereaved friend a visit, in hope of soothing her sorrow. Being introduced to the widow's chamber, the following conversation passed between them.

“My afflicted and bereaved friend, Mrs. Lee, I could not suppress a desire to give you a call, and inquire after your health; at the same time indulging a

hope, that I should find you submissive to the will of your heavenly Father, who has called away your earthly companion."

Mrs. Lee dropt a tear, and expressed her gratitude to Mrs. Stevenson for her visit. "I know, my dear friend," said she, "that I am under the greatest obligation to be submissive to the will of my heavenly Father, but the stroke which separated my kind husband from my arms, was so sudden and severe, that it shook my nervous system, and my better judgment seems to have failed. Indeed I must confess, that at times I am ready to say, I do well to be angry, but indulging a little more reflection, I am more angry with myself for possessing the thought."

Mrs. Stevenson replied, "At your advanced years, when the animal nature declines, the nervous system must be expected to relax and grow feeble, and it is not surprising, my friend, that you should bend beneath so heavy a stroke. Although your judgment now swerves from the will of God, in this afflictive event, I hope the cloud may soon disperse, and that you shall say, his will is love! Besides, as you have enjoyed so much mercy from the Lord, and walked before him so many years, you cannot be altogether ignorant of Satan's devices, for he never fails to take advantage of our afflictions, to raise a turbulent disposition in our breast against the hand of God when laid upon us."

"True, Madam," said Mrs. Lee, "but there are circumstances in my affliction which give a long range

to my reflections. Mr. Lee and myself have enjoyed the marriage life more than fifty years, and our affections for each other were so strong, that it could not fail to make the parting more severe when the sad moment came."

"I must confess, Mrs. Lee, that this should dictate to you a strong reason for submission, and a grateful acknowledgment to God who mercifully spared you to live together so very many years. In the history of your life you have known many young people enter into marriage, and before the year expired, the nuptial bed was exchanged for the bed of death. When you were in the meridian of life, with the cares of the world, and your tender offspring around you, God might then have called your husband away, which would have given your widow's weeds a deeper tinge. That the Lord should have spared you together to see your children so honorably settled in the world, and bless you together in peace and comfort to such an advanced age, all these should demand your submission, and excite your gratitude."

"Mrs. Stevenson, I dare not contradict your observations; they are just, and perhaps I should use much the same arguments to any other person I might visit in a situation like my own. At present my mind is so dark and agitated, I find it hard to think, and harder still to submit. The Lord did indeed spare us together much longer than falls to the lot of thousands; and the remembrance of this, however strange to say, serves to drop another grain of wormwood into the cup of my

affliction. My earthly comforter is gone, and I am left alone in feebleness and age, with little ability to help myself."

Mrs. Stevenson took occasion to remind Mrs. Lee that the knowledge and enjoyment of God, through Jesus Christ, by the influences of the blessed Spirit, was the only source of real happiness to Christians in this life, and forms the ground of their hope for eternal felicity. "I appeal to you, my friend, whether this has not been the fountain from whence you have derived your peace and consolation for very many years past, and from which it is your privilege now, under your bereavement, to draw your support and refreshment, to cherish your depressed mind! I presume you will say, 'This is true. You will give me leave to say, that among the many characters or relations in which God has revealed himself to you in the Bible, there is *one* you could not have experimentally known until you lost your husband. It is that of a *husband* to the *widow*. Isaiah liv. 5, Jeremiah xlix. 11. Although you may have read such passages while your husband was alive, it is certain you then had no need of them. But now I hope that relation of the Lord, as the widow's God, will appear to you as expressly designed to comfort you in your present widowhood. Look, therefore, Mrs. Lee, to your heavenly Husband. By faith take hold of the arm of his power for your support, and be assured, that you have a share in his compassion, kindness, and love. Thus you will happily finish the remainder of your journey upon earth, and

eventually find that God can make up your loss a thousand fold!"

"I hope, my dear friend Mrs. Stevenson, that I can say, the Lord has taught me, as a sinner, the knowledge of himself as he is in Christ, my Saviour and my friend; and while I have publicly professed this hope, I have not been without some of its consolations in my own soul. But still I must confess to you, the stroke which fell upon my husband, found me in a dark state of mind; I had wandered too far in my affections from the Lord, and therefore unprepared to meet the event. What you have said on the widow's God and Husband, I hope I shall find to be true; but I must confess that I had never thought of it as you have now stated. I have known and felt continued need of the Lord, but not as a *widow*. This is a new subject, both for my faith and my improvement, and I hope I may enjoy the benefits of it the few days of my pilgrimage which yet remain."

"How strange is it, Mrs. Lee, that we can sentimentally believe the necessity and advantages of communion with God, and yet practically neglect the privilege; and our foolish hearts wander after other objects, to our own disappointment and sorrow! It is too true, we condemn the perfidious conduct of the Israelites in departing from their God, and committing idolatry, while we may be acting a similar part ourselves. It is not, therefore, a subject of so much surprise, if you were off your guard when death visited your family, that it should create so painful an alarm."

“Perhaps, Mrs. Stevenson, you did not hear that my kind husband died so suddenly in a fit of apoplexy. After breakfast he took a walk in the garden for the benefit of air and exercise. On his return he took a seat in his easy chair, and soon after I perceived that he reclined his head, which I thought was the effect of his walk. I spoke to him, but he did not answer. The fatal stroke was given, and my servants aided to convey him to his bed. Medical aid was instantly called, but it was in vain; and in twenty hours afterwards he breathed his last. O how I grieved, and do so still. I repeatedly asked him if his hope in Christ was firm, if he was resigned to depart, and if the Lord granted him his smiles; but he was speechless, and could only cast his eyes wishfully towards me, and then he sunk in death! One charming word from his lip would have been a cordial to my trembling heart.” At this Mrs. Lee wept profusely.

Soon as Mrs. Lee had recovered herself, Mrs. Stevenson asked her, if she had any doubts of her husband's interest in the salvation of Jesus? “Your departed friend,” said she, “was believed to be a man that knew, and enjoyed the virtues of the grace of God; loved and served his Lord in meekness and sincerity; he bore his public profession without ostentation; and his church, his family, as well as the neighborhood, are witnesses of his pious deportment, charity, and good-will, to all around him. Now, Mrs. Lee, although it might have given you great satisfaction to hear his last testimony of hope in Christ, and

of joys to come, still I must confess that his many years continuance in the service of the Lord, is a more substantial testimony to me than a mere death bed confession. How great would the difference have been, both to him and to you, if he had lived and died a proud Pharisee, or a thoughtless old sinner ! Therefore, though by the nature of his death, God did not permit him to give you an assurance of his confidence in the Lord, and bid you farewell for a season, let the testimony of his pious life satisfy you ; and be assured, that precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints, let the time when, or the manner of their death be what it may."

"Certainly, my good friend Mrs. Stevenson, I ought not to dictate to my Almighty Father, how, nor when, he should take my husband away. I do believe he was a good man. Grace in Christ was not only the rest and joy of his soul, and the subject of his conversation, but it was his grief when he heard any speak of salvation, if grace was not the first and the last in that great concern. And although he bore the fruits of the Spirit in his humble walk with God, in his temper and conduct, he was so sensible of his infirmities, that he lived upon the grace of Christ as his daily bread ; so that I can have no doubt of his future happiness, and I ought to be resigned, though my bereavement is severe."

"Mrs. Lee, well is it for us that God knoweth our frame, and remembereth that we are but dust ; and the best saint upon earth has too much of the dust of

unbelief and pride attached to his mind and affections, which generally appear the most when it is the time of affliction. But the Lord knows how to remove the dust, or so to allay it, as to produce our real advantage. For as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him ; and I hope you will speedily be brought to confess, ‘He hath done all things well.’”

“I must acknowledge, Mrs. Stevenson, that next to the loss of my husband’s person, I mourn his absence at the morning and evening devotions of my family ; for indeed he was a man of fervent prayer. Many of our friends who occasionally visited us on an evening, lately observed the spirituality of his petitions. One of them, not long since, on his going out, whispered to me, ‘Mrs. Lee, I perceive that spirituality in your husband’s devotions, which induces me to believe that the Lord is ripening him for eternity ; and perhaps he may soon take him to himself.’ However, I did not then think much of it, and I rather attributed it to the warm feelings of my friend, than to the cause which he suggested. Now he is taken from me, and I hear his voice no more !”

“And did not that happy frame of your husband’s mind remind you, Mrs. Lee, of what Eliphaz said to Job ? ‘Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in in his season.’ Job v. 26. You know that the husbandman does not reap his corn until it is fully ripe, and God has his ripening time for his saints, or they would not be fit to be gathered into his heavenly garner ; and certainly this



visible ripening of your husband for heaven, should have increased your joy! In his conversation, as well as in his prayer, you have often heard him express his hope of the joys of the blessed in heaven; and can you be in sadness, because he now enjoys the fruition of that hope in glory? He lived with you to a great age. You perceived his activity to decline. He could not but express his feelings under the infirmities and pains he endured, though in patience he possessed his soul. Now his blessed Saviour has released him from the burden of the flesh, which rests in hope of the resurrection to a glorious immortality. Surely you will not grieve that God should grant him his prayer by such a happy deliverance? You know that he often lamented with tears, the secret evils of his heart, and the power of unbelief which so often interrupted his sensible communion with his Saviour; frequently expressing his desire to depart and to be with Christ, which was far better than to dwell in a tabernacle of clay, surrounded with evils; and now his spirit is received into the immediate presence of his Lord, beholding him in his glory, perfected in holiness, and singing salvation to God and the Lamb, can you then indulge the tear of grief because of his happiness? Think of this Mrs. Lee, and you will readily compose your mind, and say, 'Father, not my will, but thine be done.' Besides, you have not for ever lost your husband, he has only gone a little before you. Your age and infirmities indicate that the time is not far distant, when you will be called to follow him to that happy

state, where parting shall be no more. Instead of mourning and weeping, let this call of God in his providence teach you the importance of being ready, whenever he shall send death to call you away. I wish you to remember, that your husband was not your God and Saviour; and however that good man was worthy of your affections, it is possible you may have made too much of him; and therefore he was first removed, that you might more earnestly seek your whole happiness alone in God. I will close my morning's visit to you, Mrs. Lee, by expressing my hope, that you will leave your husband in the bosom of his Saviour, and rejoice in his happiness. By faith and prayer look to your heavenly Husband, as the widow's God and portion, and he will be your guide and comforter unto death; and then, through the merits of your blessed Saviour, he will receive you also to the mansions of peace, where, with your departed husband, you will join the spirits of the just made perfect, to sing his praises for ever and ever."

## ON THE DEATH OF AN AGED CHRISTIAN.

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WHEN Jesus takes his followers home  
His mercy claims our praise ;  
He saves them from the ills to come,  
On man's rebellious race.

Why should we wish them longer here,  
To struggle with the flesh ;  
Again to combat slavish fear,  
To groan and die afresh ?

Now they enjoy a rich reward,  
For all their toils below ;  
Now they behold that gracious Lord,  
Who brought them safely through.

They see the *Man* for sinners slain,  
A *God* he reigns above ;  
They mingle with the heav'nly train,  
And sing redeeming love !

Eternal honors to that grace  
Which rais'd them to the skies,  
And gave their souls a resting place,  
In the new Paradise.

T. B. L.



## JACOB PRESENTED TO PHARAOH.

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Behold the august sire ! bending beneath  
The weight of years. From shepherds' lowly tent  
He enters now into the presence of  
The mighty king ; grasping the arm of him,  
His son whom long and much he mourn'd as lost,  
He pours his blessings on the sov'reign's head,  
And then, with slow and solemn step, retires  
Beneath the smiles of heaven, to rest in peace.

THE presentation of the venerable patriarch Jacob to Pharaoh, king of Egypt, by the hand of his son Joseph, must have been a very interesting scene. The short record which we have of that ceremony in the forty-seventh chapter of Genesis, has frequently claimed devout admiration ; and as it cannot fail to afford a few lessons of instruction, especially to the aged, this paper shall be devoted to the subject.

The scene was at Memphis, the royal city of the kings of Egypt, where Pharaoh held his court. No doubt the royal chamber in the palace was highly enriched with a combination of architecture, sculp-

ture, tapestry, painting, and other productions of the fine arts, for which the Egyptians at that time were so eminently celebrated; exhibiting that magnificence and grandeur, for which the whole edifice was designed. The principal characters which formed the scene, were PHARAOH THE KING, JOSEPH, THE VICEROY, and JACOB, the venerable PATRIARCH. The king was seen in his brilliant robes of state, and the crown encircling his brow added dignity to his person, while the golden sceptre, grasped in his hand, proclaimed his authority and power. On either side stood his counsellors of state, his priests, magicians, and astrologers, while the surrounding guards, with glittering spears, gave an air of splendid dignity to the whole. The next was Joseph, who, in the land of Canaan, when only a youth of seventeen years of age, was torn from his home, separated from his brethren, by them sold as a slave for twenty pieces of silver, and carried into Egypt. In this foreign land he was immured in prison for the space of nine years, when, by a remarkable incidence of Providence, through a dream of Pharaoh, he was delivered from prison, and raised to the second dignity in the kingdom of Egypt. How great the change! Now no longer clothed in prison garments, but covered with a brilliant robe of state; and instead of rude fetters galling his trembling limbs, a chain of richest gold hangs suspended around his neck. The third was the patriarch Jacob, the endeared father of Joseph, who, having passed through scenes of bitterness and sorrow, was rescued

from the famine in Canaan, and with his family placed in the land of Goshen. Joseph having already introduced his brethren to the king, and received his approbation for their dwelling in the land, now enjoys the peculiar pleasure of presenting his father to the royal presence, a scene this which we cannot but contemplate with delightful feeling.

The moment for introduction arrives. The massy doors of the chamber unfold. Joseph enters in his robes of state, grasping the hand of his aged father, clad only in his plain patriarchal garments, girt around with his girdle, while his venerable beard, silvered with age, flowed upon his breast. Slow and solemn are his steps; supported on the one hand by the very son whom he once believed was devoured by wild beasts, and numbered with the dead, while with his right hand he leans upon that long cherished staff, with which he had twice passed over Jordan. Every eye is fixed upon this extraordinary stranger, and all is hushed into silence. What gives a cheerful zest to the whole is, there stands the father of the very Joseph who saved the country from the horrors of famine! If grandeur and simplicity form a contrast with each other, it is here exhibited in strongest colors. Advancing to the foot of the august throne, Joseph seats his father before the presence of the king. Now every ear in the assembly is open, watching the accents of him who shall first open his lips on the occasion. Jacob, with solemn grace and dignity, rises from his seat and blesses Pharaoh—"May it be the pleasure of God, that the

waters of the Nile may be filled, and that the famine may remove from the world in thy days.”\* One would naturally suppose that the king would have acknowledged the fervency of this pious benediction, or he would have made inquiries concerning the famishing inhabitants of Canaan, the health of Jacob after so long a journey, or if Jacob were satisfied and happy to reside in the land of Goshen. Instead of any such questions, “Pharaoh said unto Jacob, How old art thou?” Possibly, as the Egyptians were not so long lived as the Hebrews, the king had never before seen a man so aged and venerable in his countenance and appearance. And Jacob said unto Pharaoh, “The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years: few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage.” With this answer Pharaoh appeared satisfied; and as the ceremonial of introduction to a sovereign is usually short, Jacob again arose, blessed Pharaoh, and retired from his presence.

You will perceive that the direct answer which the patriarch gave to the inquiry of the king concerning his age, was, that he was “one hundred and thirty years old.” The account which he combined with the answer, is to be read as a striking comment upon his own age, or as a miniature picture of the history of his life. We will therefore examine the interesting parts which it contains, with the intention of deriving

\* The Targum of Jonathan.



a few lessons of instruction for our personal improvement.

I. He acknowledges his life to have been a *pilgrimage*; that is, his not having any fixed place of residence for a length of time; frequently removing from one city or country to another. This indeed, was the case with Jacob, more than any other of the patriarchs. He first dwelt in Canaan, from thence he removed to Padan-aram, and then returned to Canaan again. For some time he dwelt at Succoth, and then at Shechem, and afterwards at Hebron, and now he was come down to Egypt. Connect the pious character of Jacob with St. Paul's description of a believing pilgrim, in the eleventh chapter to the Hebrews, and you will perceive that the journey of life is connected with a *desire for a better country, that is, an heavenly*; and then, we must admit, that Jacob considered himself as a stranger upon earth, looking forward to a future state of endless felicity; and in this hope he closed his eyes in peace. Happy is the man who, in like manner, through the arduous journeys of life, serves his God in faith and sincerity, and whose aim is eternal bliss and glory!

II. Jacob, to his days and years, gives the qualities of *few and evil*. Few, indeed, for in the review they appeared but as yesterday, quickly gone as a watch in the night, or as an arrow that cutteth the air. Few in comparison with many other aged men of former

years, and fewer still, when viewed in the glass of that vast and endless eternity which awaits the final destiny of all mankind. Few as were the days of the years of Jacob, they were strongly incorporated with evil. Very many indeed were the afflictions of this man of God. He was compelled to leave the habitation of his father Isaac, and fly from the face of his brother Esau. Fourteen years he endured severe hardships in the house of Laban. In Shechem he suffered extreme affliction on account of his daughter. At Ephrath he lost his beloved Rachel by death. At Hebron he was led to believe, that not only his beloved Joseph was torn to pieces, but that his Benjamin also, by going down to Egypt, should return no more, and thus bring down his gray hairs with sorrow to the grave. How many are the afflictions of the righteous! Yet all these, as in the case of Jacob, work together for good to them that love God; and eventually the richest fruit shall be produced. Let the aged reader review the scenes of his own life, and probably he will be compelled to confess with Jacob, that "few and evil have the days of the years of my life been."

III. To Pharaoh the patriarch gave a sort of genealogical account of his years, by comparing them with those of his forefathers. Though arrived at 130 years of age, he informed the king that "he had not attained unto the days of the years of the life of his fathers in the days of their pilgrimage." For his grandfather Abraham was 175 years old when he died. His father

Isaac lived until he was 180 years. Of course Jacob was 50 years younger. Here it is shown that the genealogy of a family is not only valuable in itself, but is calculated to instruct the mind in the history of God's conduct to our ancestors, and to inspire us with gratitude for our personal preservation.

IV. The manner how Jacob numbered the periods of his life is very observable. He reckoned his years by his days. This is not unusual in the last stages of a long life, and is calculated to teach us a useful lesson. In early life it is usual to look forward and anticipate a thousand enjoyments, and we are in the habit of measuring our wished-for time by length of years, but no sooner does old age come upon us than we are practically and sometimes painfully convinced, that the time of our departure is at hand, and we can only number the fragments of our earthly existence by days. It may be remarked, that when young persons announce their age, they generally date it backward, saying, that at such a time they were 18 or 21 years of age; but when old persons speak of their age, they date it forward, that at such a time they will be 70 or 80 years old. However, as we know not what a day may bring forth, the best calculation is by days, and those days, and those only, which are spent in walking with God, honoring Christ, bearing the fruits of righteousness and kindness to our fellow creatures; these only are worth recording. May this be the daily employment of every one who reads these pages,

and then the length of his days and years will be crowned with prosperity.

V. I cannot venture to conclude this subject without drawing from it an encouragement in favor of those aged persons who indulge in the painful apprehension that their last days may be overwhelmed with the dark clouds of adversity and sorrow. When Jacob was in Hebron, his afflictions were severe. While the famine drew its dark circle around him, his affectionate heart was lacerated and torn by the loss of his Joseph and Benjamin. Beneath the pressing weight of despondency he said, "All these things are against me." When he was informed by his sons, on their return from Egypt, that his Joseph was yet alive, "his heart fainted, and he believed them not." How powerful are the workings of unbelief and despondency upon the best of men when overtaken by adversity! Had Jacob at that time been permitted to see the secret wheels of Providence in motion, he would have said, "All these things are working for my good." For certainly, by these apparently very complicated and painful events, God was preparing the way for his going down into Egypt; for his relief from the horrors of famine; for the joy of embracing his beloved Joseph again; and for spending the last seventeen years of his pilgrimage in peace and comfort in the land of Goshen. Who would not trust so good a God, who performeth wonders in his providence and in his grace, for the relief and the happiness of his children! Art

thou, my reader, bowing beneath the weight of despondency, and writing bitter things against thyself, saying, I shall no more see good in the land of the living? Learn from Jacob's case, to trust in Jacob's God. As Jacob, under all his calamities, had a Joseph in Pharaoh's court secretly managing all his concerns for good, so you have a better Joseph in the court of heaven, Jesus the Son of God, who ever liveth to make intercession for you. Joseph could only nourish his father in the decline of life with earthly comforts, but our Joseph, Jesus above, can grant you the favors of his providence, and the richer blessings of his grace, with this assurance, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." Thus may you trust your faithful God; see your happiest days at last, and then at the close of your life your sun will set in brightness without a cloud.

VI. Notwithstanding we are all alike insignificant and vile as the worms of the earth, and God himself respecteth not the persons of men, yet there is a feeling in the breast of an inferior and obscure person, which produces gratification and perhaps awe in being presented to one who is raised to the highest rank of society in honor and dignity. Whatever may be the wish or inclination of my reader to receive such a mark of attention, though it bear the least resemblance to the presentation of Jacob to the sovereign of Egypt, let it be remembered, that the highest honors which one man can confer, and another receive, soon fade, sicken,

and die. There is a far more interesting and honorable presentation I wish you to enjoy. It is first at the throne of grace, where you can obtain mercy, and find grace to help you in time of need. None can present you to this throne but Jesus, the Redeemer and Intercessor; "for through him we both," that is, believing Jews and Gentiles, "have access by one Spirit unto the Father." Eph. ii. 18. As Pharaoh granted Jacob an assurance of protection and subsistence during his life in the plains of Goshen, and thereby made his presentation at the throne the more interesting to his grateful feelings, what will you not feel and express, when bowing in prayer and adoration at the throne of your gracious God, who "hath promised to supply all your need," both of body and soul, "according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus?" Surely you will exclaim with St. Paul, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus!" Inestimably valuable as is communion with your God on earth, there is yet a more august and glorious presentation to be anticipated on the final day. This will not be in favor of any individual person only, but of the whole body of the redeemed and sanctified, as "the bride, the Lamb's wife, who shall have made herself ready for the marriage. For Christ loved the Church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not

having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." Ephesians, v. 25-27. On that glorious presentation day, the grandeur of Pharaoh's court, with the multiplied magnificence of princes who have sat in majesty upon their thrones in successive ages, and all this worldly pomp, will be cast into shade, and vanish away. Christ shall appear upon the throne of his Father, invested with the fulness of his glory; at whose presence the heavens, the earth, and the sea, shall flee away! The new heavens, as the presentation chamber of the King of kings, will exhibit a brilliance exceeding the brightness of the stars and the splendor of the sun! The *Bridegroom* will then address his redeemed *bride*, and say, "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

O what a wedding day  
Will that bright morning bring!  
Our spirits married to this clay,  
And both to Zion's King!  
Angels will shout aloud,  
And we with joy shall sing;  
To him that wash'd us in his blood,  
This perfect praise we bring.

SWAIN.

What a delightful prospect is this to a Christian in the near approach of death and eternity! Though the days of his years be like those of Jacob, few and evil, how firm is the ground of his hope in Christ, for

a share of that glory which shall hereafter be revealed. Suffer me then to exhort you, my aged friend, to press forward, amidst every obstruction, for the prize of your high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Remember that your presentation at the throne of God's grace in time, is a prelude and an earnest of that final presentation before the throne of his glory in the highest heavens. Strong excitement this to communion with your God, while in the path of your pilgrimage on earth. You will invariably find a greater spirituality of mind in a devotedness to the service of your Lord, an increasing glow of friendship to your fellow travellers, and a sweeter serenity of mind in waiting all the days of your appointed time until your final change shall come. In no better way can I therefore close these reflections, than by reciting that appropriate and sublime doxology of Jude, contained in his two last verses. "Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever." Amen.



# THE TEARS OF INFANTS

COMPARED WITH THOSE OF THE AGED.

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But tears alas ! are trifling things,  
They rather feed than heal our woe ;  
From trickling eyes new sorrow springs,  
As weeds in rainy seasons grow.  
Thus weeping urges weeping on ;  
In vain our mis'ries hope relief,  
For one drop calls another down,  
Till we are drown'd in seas of grief.

AN.

THE habit of comparing persons or things with each other, is not only designed to estimate the qualities of each, but to ascertain the preference to be given, the one to the other. In the present case it is merely to show the coincidence between the first stage of human life in infancy and the last in old age, by the shedding of tears, which is usual in both. In addition to the well-known physical causes for the production of tears, it is well known that the nervous system in infancy is so extremely delicate and feeble, that the superior power of the passions frequently overcomes it, and tears are the effect of the conflict. So, in the extre-

mity of life, the nervous system, which in manhood was strong and bold, supporting and managing the passions, is now so reduced and enfeebled, that again the least conflict which occurs seldom fails to produce a flow of tears. True, it is humiliating for a person to be subject to the trite adage, "Once a man, and twice a child;" but in extreme old age it is seldom that the imputation can be avoided; and enfeebled humanity is compelled to submit. This comparison, therefore, is by no means intended to degrade, but, on the contrary, to forewarn the man of seventy, of what he may be should he live to the age of fourscore and upwards. By pursuing this comparison, it is possible we may likewise discover some traits of character in an aged Christian, which may teach us the support and consolations of grace amidst the wreck of nature, and thereby obtain an additional proof that our heavenly Father does not leave his people when they are about to forsake the world. We will state the comparison in the following familiar manner, presuming it may be instructive and acceptable to the reader.

I. The tears of helpless infants are well known to be unconscious and involuntary to themselves. They know not for what they weep, and of course are equally incapable of communicating the cause. So also in debilitated age, when the manly tone forsakes its hold, and the power of nerve has almost expired, we painfully observe the poor old man's tears silently flow down the channels of his furrowed cheeks. Ask

him the reason why—he is no more capable of a reply than the infant at its mother's breast. This is a case frequently attending the decrepitude of old age, and teaches us that

In age, in infancy, from other's aid  
Is all our hope ; to teach us to be kind.

YOUNG.

II. The tears of infants usually flow on being deprived of their mother's breast, which to them is nature's nourishment and their delight, nor will they be pacified until it be restored. Sad is the case of that poor old man who once sucked the full breast of prosperity, and now can say little else than, "My tears have been my meat day and night." Ps. xlii. 3. It is certainly true of young Christians, that "as new born babes they desire the sincere milk of the word, that they may grow thereby;" and if by any cause they are deprived of this sacred means of consolation, it is to them a cause of deep regret. In old age, the second childhood, this privation is more sensibly felt. By impaired sight they find it difficult to read their Bible, and by deafness the Gospel is preached to them almost in vain; and no wonder their tears flow on the loss of such blessings. Well is it for such an aged Christian, if he has improved his earlier days, and like David, "has hid the word of God within his heart," for now the Spirit of Christ, according to promise, "will bring all things to his remembrance," which, in some good degree, will supply the deficiency of his natural organs. What a strong reason is this that

we should make better use than we do of our Bible while we have sight to read, and be more attentive to the preaching of the Gospel, while we have ears to hear; lest in very old age we should be deprived of both, and be constrained to lament the loss of our privilege, at the expense of our tears.

III. Infants are frequently bathed in tears from the effects of sickness, which they are incapable of describing either to the physician or to the nurse; and such is the last stage of debilitated age, that the whole animal system appears to be so sensibly affected, that tears will start from the eyes while the poor old man is incapable of describing any particular cause of complaint; for it is the general breaking up of his whole animal system, that must soon terminate in death. We must confess that there is something in the tears of helpless infancy that awakens our tenderest sympathy, and one is disposed to inquire, How a good and wise Creator could introduce such a multiplied race of infants into the world, subject to such diseases and complaints? Now, if it be admitted that there is a language in tears, and we are disposed to learn the cause of the infant's sorrow, David shall speak for the child, and justify God for its tears, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." Ps. li. 5. "And who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one," said Job, xiv. 4. This is easy to be transferred to the lamentation and the tears of an old man. Enter into his chamber, and he

will inform you, that the afflictions of a long life, and the pains of decaying nature, by no means produce such keen sensations as those which arise from original depravity, which he knows was brought with him into the world, and which has so greatly accumulated by his actual transgressions against his good and blessed God. The tear starts and trembles in his eye, while his lips exclaim, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" His only prospect of relief and final deliverance is, by looking to that compassionate Saviour who wept in Gethsemane, and died on Calvary to save his soul; and therefore he thanks God for his hope of final victory through Jesus Christ our Lord.

IV. In the act of dressing or undressing an infant, the parent or nurse has frequent occasion to witness its tears; for such an operation is generally discomposing to its person. It is no less so to the aged when the symptoms of mortality begin to approach. However strong the faith of an aged Christian, there is something in the idea and apprehension of being *unclothed* of this mortal garment of flesh, which creates a pang. 2 Cor. v. 1-4. Thousands of such venerable saints, possessing strong faith in Christ, and rejoicing in hope of the glory of God, have nevertheless wept in anticipation of the animal pain of dying; but still, through the grace of God, and the smiles of the Saviour, death, in the issue, has been far better to them than their fears, and their painful apprehensions

were turned into joy ! May this be the felicity of the aged reader.

V. It has sometimes been observed, that whether by accident or incautiously placing a *pin* in the dress of a child, so as to touch its person, it has expressed its sensibility by cries and tears. And shall we say, that an old disciple, when looking for the grave, never meets with the *pin* ? or what St. Paul calls, “ a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan sent to buffet him, lest he should be exalted above measure.” 2 Cor. xii. 7. Certain it is, the severest conflicts are usually reserved for the last, whether they arise from the pin of temptation, or the sharper pin of a man’s well known besetting sin ; and how profuse have been the tears of the aged, when such pointed and sometimes crooked pins pierce the heart ! Luther, and thousands since, have found it so ; and this made the grace of God the more illustrious in their support and final conquest. Happy the pained man to hear his Saviour say, “ My grace is sufficient for thee : for my strength is made perfect in weakness ;” and the same person will readily reply, “ Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.” Be encouraged therefore, O Christian, and look forward, for it is written, “ God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes ; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain ; for the former things are passed away.” Rev. xxi. 4.

VI. No sooner are infant children capable of discerning objects and things that please, than they will instantly, by attitude and gesture, express an anxiety to grasp them ; and being denied, their passions arise and express themselves in tears of anger. I wish this could not be applied to any who have arrived at old age ; but alas ! the fact is too evident to be denied. Whatever their eyes see, their hearts covet to possess ; and sometimes by being disappointed in obtaining a favorite trifle, they will vent their displeasure in tears. Strange that persons who, by advanced age, are about to bid the world adieu, and who have a soul to be saved or to be lost, should shed their tears on trifles, when perhaps they never dropped a tear on the thoughts of death and eternal judgment ! Well if, like second childhood, the disappointments of earthly good bathe their face with tears ; like fractious infants they must take their tears for a recompense. Let a heavenly and a nobler portion, with a contented heart, be mine : for as pious Beddome, in his old age said,

What is the world with all its store,  
'Tis but a bitter sweet ;  
When I attempt to pluck the rose,  
A piercing thorn I meet.

Here perfect bliss can ne'er be found,  
The honey's mixt with gall ;  
Midst changing scenes and dying friends,  
Be THOU my ALL in ALL !

VII. There are but few occasions that cause more abundant tears from an infant than the painful process

of weaning it from its mother's breast. Writers on the customs of the ancient Jews say, "They had three seasons which they called weaning times for their children. The first from their mother's breast, the next from the dry nurse, and the last from childish habits, at the age of twelve years." Be this as it may, of the Christian we may correctly affirm, that he has continual weaning times through life, but the last process in old age is generally the most important and severe. We are obliged to confess that we are attached to the various objects which surround us, as the infant is to its mother's breast, and we fear to part with them with equal reluctance. Although a person may possess a good hope in Christ, and often look with an anxious wish towards his heavenly home, yet when the hour of final change draws near, the idea of parting with those he loves touches the chords of the heart, or, as a stone tied to the foot of a bird, the flight is impeded; and no wonder if the conflict be productive of the parting tear! Here you may see much of the infant temper in the process of weaning; and happy is that aged Christian who at once can feel and adopt the language of David in the hundred and thirty-first Psalm, "Surely I have behaved and quieted myself, as a child that is weaned of its mother: my soul is even as a weaned child."

VIII. We all know that the absence of the parent from the child, is a cause of its bitterest tears, which nothing will assuage until the parent returns and



clasps it to the bosom. What Christian is there that knows not how to apply this to himself, especially in a time of affliction, when the Lord withholds his sensible presence from his soul? This is frequently the case with an aged Christian, and under a sense of his infirmities and pain, you will hear him repeat the plaintive language of Jeremiah, "For these things I weep: mine eye, mine eye runneth down with water, because the comforter that should relieve my soul is far from me." Lam. i. 16. It is well known, that although an infant be bathed in tears, a tender parent feels compassion, and knows how to use the means to produce its composure. With the greatest certainty we may say, "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him; for he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust." Psalm ciii. 13, 14. In order to compose the agitated mind, the Lord asks the question, "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget;" there may be such unnatural parents; "yet," saith the Lord, "I will not forget thee." Isaiah xlix. 15. What strong assurances are these! and how calculated are they, through faith, to relieve the most desponding mind. Let the aged reader remember that he cannot be far distant from his heavenly home; the conflict will soon be ended; the Lord will not forsake him, and he shall prove the truth of his own word, "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy." Psalm cxxvi. 5.

Of the propriety of this comparison between the

tears of infants and those of the aged, the reader cannot be altogether a stranger ; occasions for observations on both perpetually occur. Certainly you were unconscious of your own pains and tears in infancy, and could be no personal witness of the anxious care and tenderness of your parents when they clasped you to their bosoms, and assuaged your grief. But it is more than probable you have had children of your own, and by their infirmities, pains, and tears, they gave you many a sleepless night, which taught you to know something of your own state of helpless infancy, and at the same time inspire your gratitude to the memory of your own indulgent parents. But now you are not insensible that in your infirm age, you are realizing the whole in your own person, for old age is little else than a return of the weeping babe ! A sense of this cannot fail to produce a long train of pious reflections, and elevate your gratitude to God, and with David you will acknowledge, "By thee have I been holden up from the womb : thou art he that took me out of my mother's bowels : my praise shall be continually of thee ; cast me not off in the time of old age ; forsake me not when my strength faileth." Ps. lxxi. 6, 9. Thus by devout meditation you may mingle the tears of your infancy with those of your age, and thereby produce a sort of anodyne to compose your discomposed spirit into the will of the Lord.

It is well known by almost every person in declining years, that in the strength and activity of life, there are many refreshments and earthly comforts we

could readily have dispensed with, but under the feebleness of age, they become more highly desirable. Should the aged reader enjoy a full measure of such comforts, it certainly demands his most devout gratitude to God for his distinguishing goodness. However, you need not go far from your home to find many aged and infirm persons who once saw days of prosperity; but by a series of misfortunes have been cast into the gloomy shades of adversity. Some of these may have been humble and devout followers of the Lamb of God, and in their prosperity were kind benefactors to the poor; nor is it uncommon to find an aged weather-beaten minister of the Gospel laid upon the bed of poverty. To an aged Christian who enjoys more than a competency, what a luxury must it be to his heart, to remember such necessitous poor, impart to their relief, and thus aid to wipe away their tears! No motives can be stronger to such benevolent actions, than the feeling of his own infirmities, and a sense of the loving-kindness of the Lord to his soul; and if such be the temporal and spiritual comforts of the reader, may he, in the name of the compassionate Saviour, "go and do likewise."

Should this essay happen to meet the eye of a youth, it is hoped that from this comparison between the tears of infants and those of the aged, he may find an additional argument to teach him his obligation to love and revere his parents for nourishing him with so much care, and appeasing the tears of his grief in his state of helpless infancy. My young friend, if your

parents are now in a state of infirmity, the recollection of the subject of this paper will give an additional excitement to your affections, and prompt you to soothe their last conflicts in their approach to the grave by every means you can possibly possess. Young persons are too apt to be inattentive to the wants and necessities of the aged ; but from this hour I hope you may possess those tender feelings, that may teach you to “pity the sorrows of a poor old man.” And stronger still will this subject enforce upon your mind the important injunction of Solomon, to “Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them.” Ecc. xii. 1.

Boast not of those with'ring charms  
That must yield their youthful grace  
To age and wrinkles, earth and worms ;  
But love the Author of your smiling face ;  
That heav'nly Bridegroom claims your blooming hours ;  
O make it your perpetual care  
To please that everlasting Fair ;  
His beauties are the sun, and but the shade is yours.  
WATTS' LYRICS.

# DOZING BEFORE SLEEP

EXEMPLIFIES THE LINGERING DEATH OF MAN.

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A deeper shade will soon impend,  
A deeper sleep my eyes oppress;  
Yet still thy strength shall then defend,  
Thy goodness still shall deign to bless.

The deeper shade shall fade away,  
The deeper sleep shall leave my eyes;  
Thy light shall give eternal day!  
Thy love the rapture of the skies!

HAWKESWORTH.

**D**ID man possess an anxious solicitude to learn the appendages to his own mortality, there are a thousand things attached to himself, which are calculated to afford him instruction. Sleep, we all acknowledge is a Scripture emblem of death<sup>†</sup>; and in those to whom a lingering death is assigned, there are certain changes which gradually appear, bearing strong marks of approaching dissolution, analogous to a man's dozing before he falls into sleep. These are visible in the last stages of fatal sickness, and equally, if not more

so, in an aged person, when nature is dissolving and yielding to the sleep of death ; and as this comparison is so strong and seriously instructive, we will devote a few pages to its consideration.

A person returning from a journey, or a laborer from the fatigues of the day, will seat himself in the chair of ease, for the purpose of rest. If you observe such a person, you will perceive a gradual process conducting him to sleep. He first feels a lassitude, and complains of weariness in his animal frame. His attention to surrounding objects gently withdraws, and his thoughts become so confused, that the conversation of others is uninteresting, or partially unintelligible. The passions too insensibly grow calm, and become indifferent to every person and thing around him. You will next perceive nature gradually yielding to slumber, the countenance changes, the eyes wink, open and shut involuntarily, and he finds it impossible to keep them open. The head, incapable of supporting itself, nods and totters ; and the nearer sleep approaches, it falls yet lower, and seeks a resting place. But all this is not sleep, it is only the prelude to an actual state of sleep, when body and mind become unconscious. This description is so obvious, that none can possibly call it in question, neither are there any who have not observed and felt these sensations, when nature required the refreshment of sleep.

What a strong resemblance is this to a person in the last stages of mortal sickness, and how much more so is it visible in an aged person, when the animal

nature declines, and he draws near to the sleep of death ! Here we have no need to indulge the flight of fancy ; both cases are real, and are frequently presented to our observation. Let it, however, be seriously remembered, that this gradual decline is not allotted to all in sickness, nor to all in old age, for the stroke of death frequently comes instantaneously, and without the least warning ; and happy is that man who, by the grace of God, is prepared to meet thus suddenly his final change !\* As this comparison is undoubtedly correct, let us examine its features in the case of an aged man, who dozes beneath his infirmities before he falls asleep in death.

As a general case we will say this man has past the age of sixty, when he actually begins to doze under his infirmities. The animal and nervous systems imperceptibly begin to lose their former tone ; the muscles grow stiff, and a partial debility gradually steals upon the frame. Still, he would rather attribute these feelings to fatigue, the effects of a severe cold, or anything else, rather than believe it to be a symptom of the advance of old age, so averse are we to enter the shades of mortality ! However, he soon finds his activity forsake him, and notwithstanding all his exertions he is compelled to take the chair of ease. Now the change becomes more visible, as year after year steals on ; the senses and the memory grow dull, and he finds some difficulty in recollecting recent

\* The venerable author fell asleep in death in the manner here so graphically described by him.—PUBLISHERS.

events, and the names of persons with whom he was once familiar. The sight fails and becomes indistinct, and like one half awake and half asleep, the objects around him are viewed with indifference. Against this partial stupor he strives with all his energy, but so strong are these increasing symptoms, that he finds his resolution insufficient, and like a man that wishes to keep himself awake he rubs his eyes in vain. Whoever looks at a person in the act of dozing, will perceive the muscles in his face to relax, and he loses that sprightliness of countenance which he wore when full awake; and this change is so general in the face of man in old age, that it need only to be named to be remembered. So true is the sentiment of Job on the conduct of God to man, expressed in his fourteenth chapter. "Thou prevailest for ever against him, and he passeth: thou changest his countenance, and sendest him away." It is so natural for a person to keep off these infirmities as much as possible, that this aged man, and his friends likewise, may imagine his growing weakness to be the effect of some temporary disease, which may easily be removed by medical aid, or a change of air; but such means can only alleviate for the day, without effecting a cure, and therefore, like a man in a doze, he may arouse for the moment, and then sink again into slumber; for nature in this is irresistible, and will take its course in conducting us to the bed of death. From these several symptoms and stages of increasing debility in age, it may be truly said of the person, he *dies daily*; and these feelings are but what St. Paul



calls, "death working in us," which sooner or later will be completed in the grave. The history of old age informs us, that some may continue longer in this mortal state of dozing than others; but finally nature becomes exhausted, the man bows his head, and then gently falls asleep, to awake no more until the morning of the resurrection.\*

These observations on dozing will lead us to inquire into the time when a person actually falls asleep, and this will aid our further inquiries on the subject of man's death. Every one is more or less sensible of an inclination to sleep, and is equally conscious of dozing before sleep embraces him; but the important question is, has he any consciousness of the instant when he actually falls asleep? A man may correctly fix the time when he retires to rest; sleep may be withheld from him for a considerable time, and as he dozes and tosses upon his bed, may have sufficient recollection to count the striking hour as it passes; but his anxiety for sleep rather keeps him awake until the senses yield the victory to sleep. Not unfrequently, when extremely fatigued, we have thrown ourselves in the attitude for rest, and suddenly, without expectation, have dropped asleep, and then as suddenly awoke in surprise that we had really been asleep. View this subject in any way you please, and it will bring you to this conclusion, that sleep to man is unconscious; and

\* Those who are disposed to examine the physical causes of sleep, and those of death, will find a pretty near resemblance between the two.

that it is a fact, no person in the world ever knew the moment, or felt the sensation, of falling into sleep. This, therefore, is one of the great secrets which it hath pleased the infinite wisdom of God to conceal from man, and it will teach us something of what it is to die. Certainly some have died under exquisite pain, and others have departed as easy as though they gently fell asleep; and it is likewise true, that no one has returned from the shades of death to tell us of his sensations in the act of dying. Still, as sleep is the Scripture emblem of death, and as man is unconscious of the instant of sleep overtaking him, so we presume it is in death, else the emblem itself would lose its chief significancy. In order, therefore, to obtain as much information as possible upon this solemn and interesting subject, we will examine a few passages of Scripture, by which we may more correctly determine, whether the unconsciousness of sleep and that of death are alike.

To give the inquiry as full an investigation as possible, we will advert to the feelings of David, expressed in the one hundred and sixteenth Psalm, "The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow. Then called I upon the name of the Lord; O Lord, I beseech thee, deliver my soul." These pains were felt, not when he was dying, but under the severity of his persecuting enemies; when he was cast upon a sick bed; and at the same time felt the pressure and desert of his sins. From all these sorrows the Lord

actually delivered him ; and he afterwards wrote this Psalm as a memorial of the Lord's goodness to him ; and after this he lived many years. When he actually died, it is said of him, " David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep." Acts xiii. 36. Stephen could not but anticipate his violent death, and felt the severity of the stones with which he was murdered ; but his soul was serene, and after commending his spirit into the hands of his Saviour, " he fell asleep." Acts vii. 60. Solomon describes the act of separation between the body and spirit at death, by " loosing the silver cord." Eccle. xii. 6. Not cutting, which would produce a painful sensation, but *loosing*, as a knot forming a bow, may gently be untied in an instant, without creating pain. The Apostle Paul will further aid us on the subject by his description of the state of those who shall be found alive on earth at the final coming of the Lord Jesus to raise the bodies of his saints. " Behold, I show you a mystery ; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump ; for the trumpet shall sound ; and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." 1 Cor. xv. 51, 52. Now all who believe this statement indulge the impression, that this expected change will be equivalent to death ; and so also was the translation of Enoch and Elijah, for of this we are assured, " that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God." This great change the apostle states to the Corinthians will be " in a moment, in the

twinkling of an eye," which, you know, can be done in an instant; but when he wrote his second Epistle to the same people, it appears that he had reconsidered the time of that change. He therefore drops the computation of time, and describes it thus, "Absent from the body—present with the Lord." So quick and imperceptible the transition, that no computation of time is adequate to describe it! So quick and imperceptible also is the state of a man in a doze to falling asleep, and certainly we know not of a hair's breadth between life and death, between time and eternity! Solemn thoughts these for our consideration.

These observations do not by any means imply, that because a man insensibly slides into the sleep of death, that there is a total period to his existence; or as some infidels have grossly imagined, that he falls into an eternal sleep, will awake no more, and is buried in everlasting oblivion. Sentiments of this description can only be maintained at the forfeiture of reason as well as of the revealed word of God. On the contrary, conscience dictates a future state to man, and the word of God describes that state, whether of happiness or of misery. Man, in natural sleep, will awake to a new day, and man in the sleep of death, will arise to a vast eternity! It has frequently been said, That in whatsoever temper of mind a person goes to sleep at night, with the same will he arise in the morning; and certainly, if a person lives and dies an enemy to God by wicked works, it cannot

be expected that the sleep of death will change him into a friend. Impossible ! for his spirit has fled. We are not at liberty to strip from death its most solemn appendages, because at the very instant of departure the mortal may be unconscious : for as death is the wages of sin, so death must indeed be bitter to him that dies unreconciled to his God. But what renders death still more awful to the impenitent sinner, is the prospect of eternity, when he shall stand before the judgment-seat of Christ to answer for all his transgressions, and receive his final sentence. And of this we are also certain, that "many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." Dan. xii. 2. Or as our Lord, the Judge, expresses it, "The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth ; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life ; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." John v. 28, 29. No man, therefore, on serious reflection, will allow himself to indulge the supposition, that because the simple act of his dying will be unconscious, that, therefore, it is immaterial in what state or character he may die. On the contrary, if he dies in his sins, and his depraved heart is not renewed, he has many testimonies to assure him that he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven. But if his offended God shall speak pardon to his heart, and by the efficacy of his grace, aid him to walk in all holiness and righteousness of life, the scene is most

delightfully changed! For while the instant of death will be the introduction of an impenitent sinner to misery, to the righteous it will be his introduction to the presence of his God, where there is fulness of joy, and at whose right hand there are pleasures for evermore.

We cannot better exemplify this subject than by showing its application to the lingering death of a pious old man, in whom we shall perceive the virtues and triumphs of religion affording consolation and support when everything else fails. By so doing, we shall follow the admonition of David, to “mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace.” Ps. xxxvii. 37. The spectacle of an aged person retiring from the active scenes of life, his animal nature gradually declining, while the influence of divine grace and practical piety, like fruit in autumn, adorn his temper and conduct, cannot but claim our admiration, and encourage us to follow his example. The good man sensibly feels the sleep of death stealing upon him. Feebleness of body and mind unavoidably cause him to doze, and he soon learns the meaning of every nod, which inclines his head to the dust. Worldly objects lose their interest more and more, and afford him little relish. Although his affections are still united to his family, to the saints of God on earth, and to those who tenderly watch over him in his last days, yet you will frequently hear him ejaculate the pious sentiments of David, “Whom, Lord, have I in heaven but thee? and there is none on earth

I desire beside thee. My flesh and my heart faileth : but thou art the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever." Ps. lxxiii. 25, 26. His memory rapidly fails, and he forgets the principal occurrences of his long life, as well as those which passed but as yesterday ; yet it is very remarkable, that he cannot forget what things his Saviour has done for his soul, for they are written upon his heart. You will likewise perceive his countenance to change, like a man in a doze, but it does not wear the features of dejection ; on the contrary, it will be illuminated by entire submission to the will of his God, blended with the solemnity of bidding his friends adieu, and of being unclothed of his mortal garments, to lie down upon the bed of death. Here nature must be allowed the exercise of her most tender feelings. This decaying person will be perceived still to doze ; his winking eyes become more fixed, and his tottering head falls yet lower, not unlike the full corn in the ear, which, the more it ripens for the sickle, bends beneath its own weight to the earth from whence it sprang. Now he expresses a stronger desire to quit the uneasy chair of dozing that he may rest upon his bed ; or, as St. Paul expresses it, "I have a desire to depart, and to be with Christ ; which is far better." Philip. i. 23. What he had often done in the course of his long life, when going to rest at night after the fatigue of the day, he now realizes for the last time, repeating the charming resolution of David, "I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep : for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell

in safety." Ps. iv. 8. "Happy," says Bishop Horne, "happy is the Christian who, having nightly, with this verse, committed himself to his bed as to his grave, shall at last, with the same words, resign himself to his grave as to his bed, from which he expects in due time to arise and sing a morning hymn with the children of the resurrection." Thus the good old man waits his final change, having his conversation in heaven, to prepare him for his departure from earth. As the lamp of life quivers in the socket, he frequently feels the chilling damp of mortality. Under these faintings of expiring nature, and now and then enjoying the reviving smiles of his Saviour, with pious emotion of soul he will repeat to himself those well-known lines—

"Hark ! they whisper ; angels say,  
Sister spirit, come away.  
What is this absorbs me quite ?  
Steals my senses, shuts my sight,  
Drowns my spirits, draws my breath ?  
Tell me, my soul, can this be death ?"

At length the moment of sleep arrives. The warrant signed and sealed in the court above, is delivered. Like Stephen, "he looks steadfastly into heaven ; beholds the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God." Then with his last breath he cries, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit !" Instantly the silver cord is loosed, and *he falls asleep !*

Let the consideration of this subject prove a source of consolation to surviving friends on the loss of a pious



relative. With anxiety you wait, and look for the last flight of breath from the dying friend's lips. It is gone! But remember, no sooner is the soul, "absent from the body," than it "is present with the Lord" in endless felicity. Therefore "I would not have you ignorant concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others that have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." 1 Thess. iv. 13, 14. Let your spirit bow before the Lord, instead of murmuring at the sad stroke which has deprived you of a friend, and fly to the arms of a compassionate Saviour for the enjoyment of his mercy, and for grace to finish your own course with joy.

There have been pious individuals who have expressed the most painful apprehensions of a dying hour, somewhat like those recorded, who, "through fear of death, are all their life time subject to bondage." Hebrews ii. 15. Such timid persons may not express so much fear of death as an enemy conquered by Christ; or their personal unpreparedness to meet their change; or even of the consequences of death; but express a painful apprehension of the very *act* of dying. This sometimes arises from the weakness of the natural constitution, and from the force of temptation; but let the cause be what it may, it is presumed that what has now been stated on the unconsciousness of the positive act of dying, may afford a degree of relief. Paul estimated the value of death, "for me to live," said he, "is Christ, and to die is gain." Is sleep

a blessing, a refreshment of our animal nature? Death will certainly be more so, both to body and soul, "for blessed are they who die in the Lord." Should the reader be one of this timorous class, it is only necessary for me to say, Fix your faith upon the redemption and conquest of the Lord Jesus; walk humbly with your God; and the Lord who has done so much for you already, will certainly take good care of you at the last; that whether you doze before the sleep of death, or die suddenly, he will finally receive you to his eternal kingdom and glory.

"Then, even in age and grief, thy name  
Shall still my languid heart inflame,  
And bow my faltering knee.  
O, yet this bosom feels the fire,  
This trembling hand and drooping lyre  
Have yet a strain for thee.

"Yes, broken, tuneless, still, O Lord,  
This voice transported shall record  
Thy goodness tried so long :  
Till sinking slow, with calm decay,  
Its feeble murmurs melt away  
Into a seraph's song."

## THE HOSPITABLE OLD MAN.

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Blest is the man whose soft'ning heart  
Feels for another's pain ;  
To whom the supplicating eye  
Was never rais'd in vain ;  
Whose breast expands with gen'rous warmth,  
A stranger's woes to feel ;  
And bleeds in pity o'er the wound  
He wants the power to heal.

BARBAULD.

**AFFABILITY**, kindness, and hospitality, are virtues highly to be commended, especially in those who are advanced to old age. We are informed in the nineteenth chapter of the book of Judges, that there was a man of Mount Ephraim, who removed his residence to Gibeah, and dwelt among the children of Judah, some of whom addicted themselves to the grossest vices. At that time there was likewise a Levite of Mount Ephraim, who took his servant and went to the city of Bethlehem, for the purpose of bringing home his concubine from the house of her father. On their return, arriving at Jebus, the day was far spent, and the servant, apprehensive of danger on the road, advised his master to stop for the night ; but few

Israelites living in that place, the Levite determined to go as far as Gibeah. Here they arrived at the setting of the sun, and, as was the custom of travellers in places where there was no inn for their accommodation, the Levite, his concubine, and his servant, sat themselves down in the street, in expectation that some one would invite them to a habitation for shelter. Disappointed in their hope for some time, at last an old man was coming from his work, and after asking them a few necessary questions, he most cordially invited them to his habitation, where they might find repose for the night, which they thankfully accepted. Now, although there is related in this history the wickedness of some of the men of Gibeah, which we shall not so much as name, yet there are such amiable traits of character in this old man, especially in his hospitality to the benighted strangers, and the story is recorded with so much simplicity, that we shall find it worthy of our consideration, and the conduct of the old man to be deserving the imitation of every aged Christian.

I. You may perceive in the short history of this man, that habits of industry and moderate labor are not incompatible with old age. He had been engaged in the field, either by choice or necessity, and returned at the setting of the sun, possessing a cheerful mind, and a disposition to do good to others. Indolence creates an involuntary burden upon any person, whether young or old, but especially upon those that are advancing in years, preventing the due circulation

of the blood, reducing the appetite, and seldom failing to depress the mental faculties; of course it must hasten the period of dissolution. Better, therefore, keep the animal machine in motion; it will soon enough stop of itself. In proportion to an old man's remaining strength, like the aged man of Gibeah, air and exercise will happily conduce to preserve the blessing of health, cherish the animal spirits, set a fine example to the young, and seldom fails to create an excellent anodyne for repose at night. So true is the saying of Solomon, "the sleep of a laboring man is sweet, whether he eat little or much: but the abundance of the rich will not suffer him to sleep." Eccle. v. 12. It is too often found, that citizens having by industry and hard labor accumulated a considerable store of wealth, retire to secluded scenes of life, purposely to spend the fragments of their days in ease and comfort. But they are frequently disappointed. A transition from activity to seclusion and rest, has acted unfavorably upon the nervous system, so that instead of affording them the anticipated satisfaction, it has produced a depression of spirits, a lassitude in action, which were followed with diseases that embittered their last days. Nor has this been the case with worldly men only. Christians, from this mistaken calculation, have found retirement from activity as unfriendly to the happy frame of their minds, and their usefulness in religious life, as it was injurious to their bodily health. Better, therefore, learn a lesson from the old man of Gibeah, and according to the

degree of your strength, you will find moderate labor or exercise to be of real advantage both to body and mind, and you will enjoy the greater refreshment beneath the shades of old age.

**II.** By observing the conduct of the old man on his return from the field, when he saw the strangers in the street, you will not fail to receive an impression of his amiable temper, kindness, and hospitality, carefully guided by prudence. Though he felt a concern for these benighted travellers, he did not open his door without asking them some necessary questions, lest he might suffer imposition, and expose his household to danger; for as David says, "a good man will guide his affairs with discretion." Psalm cxii. 5. The old man therefore asked the stranger, "Whither goest thou? and whither comest thou?" Certainly the aged are most competent to ask questions; they are supposed to have seen much of the world in their day, and must have, more or less, profited by their experience; and so far were these travellers from charging the old man's conduct with impertinence, the reply was respectfully returned, "we are passing from Beth-lehem-judah toward the side of Mount Ephraim; from thence am I: and I went to Beth-lehem-judah, but I am now going to the house of the Lord." This was a frank and explicit answer to the old man's questions, and gave the stranger an opportunity to express his disappointment, and the painfulness of his present situation, that the inhabitants were so devoid of feel-

ing and kindness; for, said he, "There is no man that receiveth me to his house." So far from this traveller intending to be chargeable to any family, he informed the old man, "there is both straw and provender for our asses; and there is bread and wine also for me, and for thine handmaid, and for the young man which is with thy servants: there is no want of any thing;" all he wished was a lodging for the night. Instantly the old man perceived that the stranger was his countryman, both being from Mount Ephraim; a circumstance this which usually makes a favorable impression, when persons unexpectedly meet at a distance. And when the Levite mentioned that he was going to the house of the Lord, it engaged the old man's attention still stronger; and it was so deeply interesting to his feelings, that he instantly replied, "Peace be with thee; howsoever, let all thy wants lie upon me; only lodge not in the street. So he brought him into his house, and gave provender unto the asses: and they washed their feet, and did eat and drink." What a noble spirit! He confers a favor upon the traveller in a manner so as to lay himself under obligation to the stranger by the acceptance of it. Who could have thought of meeting with such expressions of politeness and hospitality in so remote an age? Few there are in the present day of refinement, as it is called, that exhibits such an amiable disposition, so charmingly expressed, even among the higher classes of society. We cannot, therefore, but pronounce the conduct of the old man of Gibeah worthy to be imitated by all

who profess a feeling for the wants of their fellow creatures, and especially by those who love the house of the Lord. How great the contrast between this kind hearted old man and that of surly Nabal, of whom we read in the first book of Samuel, and the twenty-fifth chapter, that when David was in exile, and in distress, he sent ten young men, in his own name, and in the most respectful manner, to solicit refreshments, upon the consideration of his having dealt kindly with Nabal's shepherds. But Nabal conducted himself on the occasion in the most unfeeling and reproachful manner, saying to the young men, "Who is David? and who is the son of Jesse? there be many servants now-a-days that break away every man from his master. Shall I then take my bread, and my water, and my flesh that I have killed for my shearers, and give it unto men whom I know not whence they be?" We cannot but seriously wish there were no such surly Nabals in our day!

III. Possibly the reader may discover something further in the conduct of this old Israelite worthy of his attention. Those who are advanced in life must confess, that through the debility created by age the blood grows cold and flows sluggishly; but it must be much worse when an aged Christian's heart grows cold and uncharitable to the wants and distresses of his fellow creatures. We may hear such persons profess their attachment to the house of the Lord, as did this old Israelite, and yet, contrary to his practice,



they can see some of the same household of faith equally bending beneath the weight of years and afflictions, without possessing either the heart or hand to bestow relief. The picture of such an one is drawn in the New Testament to real life. "If a brother or sister be naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body, what doth it profit? For whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion against him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" 1 John iii. 17. To give a stronger impulse to this assertion, let us not forget that Jesus, the Judge of all, has declared, "Insomuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me." Matt. xxv. 45. If professing Christians, who habitually indulge an uncharitable disposition, should read such passages of Scripture, and then reflect upon the generous conduct of the old Israelite of Gibeah, it is presumed that the effect would be salutary, and teach them that it is good works alone that can prove their faith to be sincere.

IV. Suppose we look again at the questions which the old man asked the stranger; and if we take the liberty of reversing them, they will be found necessary and important to ourselves. "Whence comest thou? Whither goest thou?" For life is a journey, and we must not forget from whence we came, and whither

we are going. As creatures we sprang from the dust, and to the dust of death we must return. Ec. xii. 7. As sinful creatures we must say with David, "Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." Ps. li. 5. In this state and character we travel through life, either in the broad road that leadeth unto destruction, or in the narrow way that leadeth unto life everlasting. Whoever has found this narrow way, will assure you that he came into it by a new birth, that to him Christ is the way, the truth and the life, and that no man cometh unto the Father but by him. The life he lives is new, it is the path of the just, which is the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day, where there are pleasures at God's right hand for evermore! Who but must shed a tear over those aged persons, whether male or female, who have lived in the world seventy long years, and never seriously asked themselves from whence they came, whither they are going, or what will become of them after death! Should this have been the case with the reader, may the Lord powerfully convey these questions to his heart, and may the blessed Saviour, by his truth and grace, guide his feet into the way of peace, before he goes the way from whence he will no more return. But should it be otherwise, I am certain that an aged Christian, as such, can most probably improve these questions to himself, while the change of his heart, the pious course of his life, and the hope of his going home to the heavenly mansion of his everlasting Father, will

soften the remainder of his journey, and excite him to rejoice in the ways of the Lord.

V. One other circumstance in the history of this benighted traveller I cannot omit to improve. Though he arrived at Gibeah at a late hour, and found the inhabitants so inhospitable as to let him remain neglected in the street, yet it was well for him that, unexpectedly, one compassionate man found him in this state of destitution, opened his heart and hand, saying unto him, "Howsoever, let all thy wants lie upon me." Infinitely more happy for us that there is an heavenly Friend, that sticketh closer than a brother, whose eye seeth us in our wanderings, whose heart is made of tenderness and love, and who not only can rescue us from danger, but with infinite kindness and ability addresses each one of us, Let all thy wants lie upon me. Great, indeed, the mercy of this heavenly friend of sinners, Jesus the Son of God, if he has found the aged reader! If so, you need not be told, that although the Levite said unto the old man, There is no want of anything, because he had a sufficiency of bread, wine, and provender in hand; for whatever temporal favors you may possess, you are in want of everything for the peace, comfort, and supply of your soul while journeying through this wilderness of sorrow; and you must also be convinced that you have nothing of your own but what may be called sinful dust and ashes. Well indeed may the Saviour say to you, Let all your

wants lie upon me, for he is possessed of all fulness of grace and blessings ; and it is his prerogative to communicate these rich favors to you without money and without price. This is indeed the united testimony of the saints of God in all ages, that “ of his fulness have we all received, and grace for grace ;” and he also can shelter you in his house of prayer, and beneath the shadow of his wings in the inclement evening of your old age. Therefore, let me entreat you to make good use of his ample bounty, and remember what St. Paul said to the Phillippians iv. 19, “ My God shall supply all your need, according to his riches in glory, by Christ Jesus,” to whom be everlasting praise. Amen.

## ANTEDILUVIANS.

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Years roll along, the silent march of time  
Unfolds strange scenes, and peoples every clime.  
The world so fair, once form'd for happiness,  
Which God, the common Father, deign'd to bless,  
Now violence o'erspreads.

COTTREL.

ANTEDILUVIAN is a name given to that race of mankind who lived from the first man Adam to the general deluge, in the days of Noah, comprising 1656 years. Their history is contained in the first six chapters of the book of Genesis, and is recorded in general outlines. Many have been the opinions and conjectures of learned men upon this ancient people, especially of Burnett and others who have made the theory of the earth a chief part of their study. And it must be confessed, that whether we view the subject in point of its antiquity in reference to the origin of our race, or the number of years to which mankind attained, it must be pronounced a subject of interest to every intelligent mind. As aged persons are generally interested in the history of those who have seen great

length of days, I have attempted a few plain observations on the antediluvians in the expectation that they may afford a degree of satisfaction to the reader. At any rate, it will show that the same God who, for wise purposes, lengthened out their lives for some hundred years, now also "holdeth your soul in life;" will wisely measure your time upon earth, and by his efficacious grace alone, can prepare you for an eternal state of existence in the world of felicity.

Of the creations of our first parents, the transactions in Paradise, the expulsion with its consequences, and the murder of Abel by his brother Cain, there is much that might be written, and on which there have been so many volumes published, which are easy to be obtained, that on these subjects, whether historical or sentimental, very little will here be introduced. In contemplating the history of this first race of mankind, it is highly necessary that you perceive the two strong lines of distinction between the descendants of Adam, without which you cannot with precision comprehend their history. The wicked offspring of Cain, which formed one line, were called *the sons and daughters of men*. The children of Seth, who was the son given to Adam, in the place of righteous Abel, formed the other line, and were called *the sons of God*, because they were devoted to the worship of the Almighty. Cain, banished from the presence of the Lord, went to the land of Nod, and there, in process of time, and the increase of population, built a city, and called it after the name of his son Enoch, while

the children of Seth abode near at home with their father Adam. It will likewise be observed, that Moses, in this early record, has only preserved the history and genealogy of the principal persons who were patriarchs or heads of the chief families, in a direct line to Noah. No more is said of their habits, customs, employments, vices, and virtues, than to afford us some general ideas of their character, of God's conduct in his providence towards them, and also to show his just judgment in their final destruction. When Moses wrote the genealogy of this people, recorded in the fifth chapter of Genesis, he called it the Book of the Generations of Adam, which consisted of ten, extending to the five hundredth year of the life of Noah. No females were introduced into the ancient genealogies; and it is remarkable, that however particularly the births, death, and ages of those men are preserved, no record is made of the ages of the women, no, not of Eve, the mother of all living; else we might have made some estimate of the difference between the male and female ages, whether, in the course of nature at that time, their lives were shorter than those of the males; but we do not wish to be wise above what is written. However, of this we are certain, that in genealogies the females were always included in the males; and that it was the design of Moses to record those in whose line the promised Messiah was to come. For the reader's information I will here introduce a table, which, at one view, will exhibit the ten generations, with Adam

at the head, as the common father of the human family; only it ought to be remembered, that Moses makes the necessary distinction, that Adam was created immediately by the hand of the Almighty, and Eve made out of the man; but his descendants came by ordinary generation.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF THE TEN PATRIARCHS FROM THE CREATION TO  
THE FLOOD.

<i>Names.</i>	<i>Born.</i>	<i>Died.</i>	<i>Age.</i>
Adam . . . .	1	930	930
Seth . . . .	130	1042	912
Enos . . . .	235	1140	905
Cainan . . . .	325	1235	910
Mahalaleel . . . .	395	1290	895
Jared . . . .	460	1422	962
Enoch . . . .	622	987 translated	365
Methuselah . . . .	687	1656	969
Lamech . . . .	874	1651	777
Noah . . . .	1056	2006	950

Let it be remembered, that Moses, while recording the ages of our first fathers, has not left us without a solemn memento for our own improvement; for in the detail of each, he says, *and he died*; and this justifies God in his righteous sentence for man's transgression. Whatever were the length of their lives, the active scenes which attended them, and however numerous the offspring they produced, all at last were brought to death, and to the house appointed for all living. *He died!* Yes, solemn change! he died, and so must the WRITER, who now holds his pen, and the READER, whose eye is now fixed upon this page.



Suppose we arrange our further consideration of the antediluvians in the following order. 1st. Inquire into the causes of their longevity ; why they lived to so great an age. 2d. The arts and sciences they introduced. 3d. A few thoughts on their general government. 4th. Their religious principles and worship. 5th. The degeneracy of the whole race, which incurred the awful visitation of God, by which they were destroyed by a deluge of water.

I. The probable reasons assigned for the long lives of this people are many, out of which we will select the following. It has been conjectured that their length of days may be attributed to the then superior state of the earth, the air, and the climate, together with the difference of their food and exercise ; all which have been materially altered by the ravages of the flood. But is it possible to suppose, that air, climate, food, or habits, should have produced the astonishing difference of seven or eight hundred years in the life of man, from what it has been since ? We readily confess, that all these, according to their qualities, act upon the vital principle, and the animal constitution ; and in a very high degree, promote either health or debility. Several countries of later date have laid claim to the celebrity of producing great age, as a proof of the salubrity of their climate ; but they have seldom extended to more than from eighty to one hundred and fifty years, and those instances have been very few. If, therefore, we compare the highest degree

of longevity since the flood with that before it, estimating the advantages of each climate, and the supposed difference of the texture of the earth, we must be disposed to believe that some other cause must have produced the vast difference of years in the former life of man.

In attempting to account for the long life of the antediluvians, some have represented man as analogous to vegetable life. A plant, say they, being often transplanted, or the seed of some kind being sowed in successive years, lose their original qualities, degenerate and dwindle into a state of insignificance, and become comparatively useless. This comparison, however popular, cannot, I presume, with any correctness be applied to man. Ages and generations of men have not lost the powers of the mind, nor are the faculties of the bodies changed, but are known still to exist in their full force. Besides, if the difference of the years of man before the flood, and immediately after, had continued in about the same ratio of diminution to the present time, the age of man now would be scarce a day, if not become wholly extinct. Others have conjectured that the years in which these ancients lived were *lunar*, consisting only of about thirty days. This must be extremely incorrect, for by that calculation Methuselah could have been little more than eighty years of age; and some of Seth's descendants must have had children when they were only six years old; both of which are incredible! We therefore believe that the years then must have been solar, as

they are now, consisting of twelve months, or three hundred and sixty-five days.

If we may be allowed to fix any human cause for the long life of that first race of human beings, I think we may apply it to the strength of their natural stamina of constitution. For certainly none of us can call in question the right of the Supreme Creator to frame the human body, so as to continue nine hundred years as well as eighty, or to reduce it at his pleasure. We do not read of their being subject to the diseases and maladies which have been so abundant since the flood. Their simple diet, the absence of strong drink, together with their activity and labor, all these may have materially contributed to their health and long life. Our first parent Adam had no natural birth, childhood or youth; he was at once created in manhood, but whether at the age of thirty or sixty is to us unknown. We read of none of those ancient men having children until they were sixty years old, and some of them continued to have sons and daughters when they were upwards of six hundred years of age. So that we may consider them as possessing a constitution different from that of the race which has lived since the flood, and at the same time, giving us the only natural reason on which we may account for their amazing length of life.

After all that has been written or can be said upon this subject, the whole must be resolved into the sovereign will of God, who "holdeth our soul in life." Moses, who wrote the history of the world, must cer-

tainly have had the most correct knowledge of the true cause of the great age of its first inhabitants, as well as of all other human beings who existed in his day. This we may learn from his pious exhortation to the Israelites, to love the Lord their God; for, said he, "he is thy life, and the length of thy days." Deut. xxx. 20. By protracting the lives of the patriarchs and their offspring to such a prodigious age, God had wise ends to accomplish. The earth was more speedily filled with inhabitants; and it is supposed that there were more people in the world at the time of the flood than can be estimated at any other time since; especially when we consider that then there was no written revelation from God to man: his works, his ways, and his will, were verbally communicated by one person to another. All the patriarchs before Noah were born before Adam died, and from him must have been received the accounts of the creation, with all the variety of characters, changes, and circumstances before the flood. All these, and many more which might be added, are good reasons why God permitted that race to number so many years, and should create in our minds devout adoration of his wisdom, power, and goodness.

**II. THEIR ARTS AND SCIENCES.**—Industry and labor are essential to man, they are health to the body, and expansion to the mind. When God placed Adam in the garden of Eden, it was "to dress it, and to keep it;" and after his transgression and expulsion,

“in the sweat of his face was he to eat his bread.” As his posterity increased, we find several arts introduced, both for profit and pleasure, chiefly by the race of Cain; and although we may suppose them to have been in a state of crudity, still we will examine what the sacred historian says of them, to satisfy our own inquiry.

Adam, in his primeval state, was a gardener, and no doubt had some knowledge of natural history, or of the properties of animals, else he would have been incompetent to give names to the beasts and the birds. Abel was a shepherd, a keeper of sheep, and Cain was a farmer. These were the three primitive occupations, and were the most rational and necessary for subsistence. After Cain had been driven from the presence of the Lord in the land of his nativity, he went to the land of Nod, on the east of Eden, and he there builded a city, which he called after the name of Enoch. This must have been about the year 630. But whether this city was formed of houses, or of sheds made by placing stones upon each other, or of mere tents made of the branches and twigs of trees, we are not informed, but at any rate, we may call this the first appearance or commencement of architecture. Perhaps it was called a city, not so much for its extent, as to signify a permanent dwelling-place, to keep his family together, and as a defence from the enemies to which his fears exposed him, and which are always the companions of the wicked. Tubalcain, the son of Naaman, was what we call a brass-

founder, and a worker in iron, or a blacksmith ; and certainly he must have had some knowledge of mineralogy and assaying, or he would not have been able to work his ore. Jabel, the son of Lamech, was a tent-maker, as well as a grazier, or keeper of cattle. Jubal was another son of Lamech, who commenced what we call the fine arts. He was the father, inventor, and teacher of the harp, a stringed instrument, and also of the organ or pipe, a wind instrument. Josephus ascribes to Seth and his posterity the science of astronomy ; and indeed this may be called a natural and rational science ; for “the heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handy work.” This is the more probable, for as Seth was devoted to the adoration and service of God, he might have been happily directed to this sublime branch of science. This is all that may be said with safety on the employments of this first race of mankind. It is observable, however, that we find nothing intimated on the art of distilling, to produce spirituous liquors, otherwise I presume they would not have been celebrated for the length of their lives, and we should have found drunkenness added to the list of their sins.

**III. THEIR CIVIL GOVERNMENT.**—No people can long exist without some form of government, and the administration of it being lodged in the hands of one or more persons for the good of the whole. We are at no loss to determine that God himself was the great Administrator of his justice, for he expelled Adam

from Paradise, and he set a mark upon Cain for the murder of his brother Abel. It is certain there was then no written civil code of laws existing, or judges appointed for their administration, as there were afterwards in the days of Moses. Adam, the first father of the family, had severely felt the Divine displeasure in his own person, and had seen it manifested on his bloody son Cain, and from thence he could not but learn the awful consequences of sin, and the importance of obedience; and by these means he was so far capable of ordering and governing his posterity. Cain having fled from the residence of his father, we can scarcely indulge a supposition that he had any other rules for the management of his offspring than what bore a resemblance to his own wicked character. Seth and his family were under the instruction and care of their father Adam, and as these multiplied and grew, forming distinct families, every father, as head or patriarch, governed his own domestic concerns. Adam lived 930 years, and no doubt his presence, counsel, and example, must have admirably contributed to the moral benefit of the various branches of his posterity. As a proof of this, the degeneracy of the children of Seth did not take place until after the death of Adam. So true it is, that while an aged parent lives, if he be but of little other use, his presence and advice preserve his family in order and unity, but no sooner than he dies they too often bury his instructions and example in the same grave, and go astray in forbidden paths.

IV. THEIR RELIGION.—On this part of the subject, it is presumed the pious reader will find additional interest. What is recorded concerning it, informs us not only of the commencement of the religion of human beings, but the principle of it and the manner in which God was worshipped upwards of five thousand years ago. None will deny that the first man Adam was formed a being rational and intelligent, and accountable to his Maker, who had a right to give him those commands which should be a test of his rational obedience. The tree of life, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil, were both tests and symbols of God's own planting; and the whole may be said to have been the natural revelation of God to man. While, therefore, Adam and Eve continued in innocency, their obedience and devotion, heightened by all the beauties and delights of Paradise, must certainly have been in the highest natural state of perfection possible! But when Adam transgressed, and was expelled from the garden of Eden, the Lord God “placed cherubims, and a flaming sword, which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life,” thereby teaching Adam, his posterity, and us also, that man, as a transgressor, had forfeited his rectitude and privileges, and therefore could no longer approach and worship his Creator in that natural way, and that some *new* way became imperiously necessary. The most high God, who in infinite wisdom declareth the end from the beginning, whose counsels shall stand and who will do all his pleasure, now unfolded his purposes, and



opened a new way of access to himself by the promise that "the seed of the woman should bruise the head of the serpent." This eminently describes the person of Jesus the Saviour, the Son of God, the second Adam, the Lord from heaven, who, in the fulness of time, was the seed of the woman, and not of man. By his varicious sacrifice and death, he saveth his people from their sins, and destroyeth the works of the devil. Adam and Abel understood this way of restoration; for now sacrifices were offered to the Lord their God, though Cain appears wilfully ignorant of their design. We are, therefore, informed in the New Testament, that "by faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and by it, he being dead, yet speaketh." Heb. xi. 4. Cain brought the fruit of the ground only; Abel brought of the firstlings of his flock, with the fat thereof, and by faith in the promised seed, offered them acceptably to the Lord. Of this first race of fallen humanity we safely affirm, 1st, That they were sinners; 2d, That they worshipped God by sacrifice; 3d, That whatever virtues distinguished the one from the vices of the other, were wholly owing to this new way of faith and sacrifice in worshipping the Lord. And has it not been so in all ages? Is it not so with us? There is none other name given under heaven by which we may be saved, but the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The fourth chapter of Genesis and the twenty-sixth verse requires our attention. "Then men began to call

upon the name of the Lord." Then, in the days of Enos or Enoch, who was a good and gracious man, and who walked with God, I cannot persuade myself that they had lived without prayer ; but now, through the pious instruction of Enoch, their families united in social worship, calling upon the name of the Lord, especially on the Sabbath day. According to the margin of your Bible, you have another sense of this passage, which is, "then men called themselves by the name of the Lord." This distinction you find in the sixth chapter and second verse ; the sons of men are the wicked race of Cain ; the sons of God are the descendants of Seth, who preserved his worship. Enoch, among this generation, lived three hundred and sixty-five years, when he was removed from the earth, and God took him to heaven, thereby testifying that he was pleased with him, while it gave conviction to the old world, that there was a future state of existence beyond the vale of death.

V. THE DEGENERACY.—By the degeneracy of this people is to be understood their visible departure from the paths of virtue and the worship of God, which had so long distinguished them from the corrupt and wicked race of Cain ; all were degenerate from Adam, sinners in themselves, and in the sight of God. The first step in this degeneracy was taken by Lamech, who, contrary to the order of God concerning marriage, that a man should cleave unto his wife, and they become one flesh, committed polygamy, by taking two

wives, living with them at the same time, and by both having children. Gen. iv. 19. This divided the natural affections, reversed the intention of marriage, and produced a corrupt example to others. After the death of Adam, and the translation of Enoch, and men had multiplied exceedingly, the line of distinction which had so long existed between the posterity of Seth and Cain, gradually gave way, and was finally broken; so that an intercourse of marriage took place between them, and a general corruption of manners was the consequence. The offspring produced by such marriages were called *giants*; but I must question whether they were not more so in wickedness than in stature. Now the earth is declared to be corrupt before God, and the world filled with violence. “And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.” What an awful character is this of the antediluvian world! No wonder then, that “it repented the Lord that he had made man;” so repented, as to change the course of his providence to destroy the present race of mortals, as examples of his provoked justice, and then produce a new race, in which he should manifest still greater displays of his wisdom and glory.

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VI. THE DESTRUCTION.—This was an awful event, produced by a deluge of water; but in the midst of judgment God remembereth mercy! Noah, the son of Lamech, “found grace in the eyes of the Lord;”

he was a just man, and perfect in his generation, and walked with God. Peter calls him "a preacher of righteousness;" and no doubt he warned that generation of their complicated crimes and wickedness, exhorted them to repentance, and assured them of their impending ruin. God commanded Noah to build an *ark*, a vessel of given dimensions, into which he and his family should enter, together with a pair of every living animal, to preserve them from destruction, and a necessary breed for a new world. And it was so, "and the Lord shut him in." Now the windows of heaven were opened, and the rain descended upon the earth; the fountains of the great deep were broken up; all the high hills that were under the whole heavens were covered, and every living substance which was upon the face of the ground, both men and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowl of the heaven, were destroyed from the earth; and Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark. Awful catastrophe! St. Paul makes this comment upon it: "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." Heb. xi. 7. Our blessed Saviour himself, when describing to his disciples the certainty of a future judgment, adverts to the drowning of the old world. "But," said he, "as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before

the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away ; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." Matt. xxiv. 37-39.

Having drawn this plain sketch of the longevity of the antediluvians, their arts, sciences, civil government, religion, degeneracy, and their destruction by a deluge of water, with a design to instruct the reader, it is presumed that upon each of them he will indulge his own pious reflections. Among many others he will perceive the hatred which our holy God bears to the sins of men, and learn from his dreadful visitations, that "the Judge of all the earth will do right." Although the years which those ancients lived, were so vastly beyond your own, still you are continued in life by the same upholding hand, and you are under the most devout obligations to express your gratitude and praise. While the antiquity of this subject may afford you some degree of interest, let it also teach you to review the history of your own life ; bring to your recollection the sins and evils which have attended it, and convince you of the great importance of finding grace in the eyes of the Lord, that by faith you may enter into the true ark, the Lord Jesus Christ ; then you will be as safe in him for an eternal world of joy, as was Noah in the ark when God's own hand shut him in, and finally made him an inhabitant of the new world. "Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty ; just and true are thy ways, thou King of

saints. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest." Rev. xv. 3, 4. Amen.

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## THE ARK OF CHRIST'S CHURCH.

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RENT were at once the floodgates of the sky,  
And burst the great deep's fountains. All was dark,  
Throng'd with the forms of drowning men: and hark,  
O'er the wide earth one agonising cry!  
Then mid the swelling surge, careering high,  
Fraught with the world's remains, the Patriarch's ARK  
Went o'er the waters: for that wondrous bark  
Liv'd in the safeguard of Jehovah's eye.  
Past is the plague! But still o'er earth the flood  
Of sin reigns paramount: still God provides  
An Ark of health for those who walk with God;  
His power secures it, and his wisdom guides.  
Faith clings obedient to that lov'd abode,  
And o'er the waves the life-fraught vessel rides.

BISHOP MANT.

## THE OLD LADY'S BIRTHDAY.

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MRS. LIVINGSTON was a widow lady of very respectable standing in society, and what was still more honorable in her character, she had spent many years in the fear of God, and maintained a pious profession of the name of Jesus her Saviour. Her place of residence was in a small village near the city, where she had frequent opportunities to show her kindness and charity to the necessitous poor. She was blessed with two sons and three daughters, all happily settled in domestic life; and this day the aged mother having numbered her seventieth year, the several branches of the family resolved to unite and make the old lady a visit, to present her with their dutiful congratulations on the occasion.

Mrs. Watson, her eldest daughter, introduced the conversation. "My dear mother, we have all come in a group to gratify our warmest feelings, to present you our congratulations on your birthday; and I have no doubt you will believe the sincerity of our devout thanks to our heavenly Father, for having spared you

so many years to guide us with your counsel, and gladden us with your smiles."

"Yes, my daughter," replied the venerable mother, "I accept your expressions of duty with peculiar emotions of maternal affection. To see my children and grandchildren around me, adds to the obligations I am under to my God and Saviour, for our mutual preservation, and the numberless favors we have enjoyed."

"Indeed, Madam," said Mr. George Watson, who was of a lively turn of mind, "you would have been delighted to see our little folks leaping alive early this morning, each attempting to outvie the other, who should dress first and appear the gayest, to pay their respects to their grandmother; and now we have brought them by the hand to salute you on your birthday."

This was like a signal to the lovely children, for they immediately flew to the old lady, who tenderly pressed them to her bosom, and saluted them. "This," said she to Mr. Watson, "reminds me of Joseph, when he presented his two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, to his father Jacob. If I remember right, the good old man said, 'I had not thought to see thy face: and lo! God hath showed me also thy seed; and Jacob kissed them, and embraced them.' It is true, I have not been afflicted as was Jacob, several of whose sons were a sorrow to his heart, and who sold their brother Joseph for a slave. I have had no loss of my children by death; no separation; no discomposure; we have been pre-



served in health, unity, and love; and this is not only a source of consolation to my aged heart, but strongly excites my gratitude to God, who is the fountain of our mutual felicity."

Mrs. Watson, with a tear of joy starting from her eye, immediately replied, "Yes, my dear mother, we are mutually interested in the bountiful care of our heavenly Father, and I hope we shall not only live to express our gratitude, but esteem it our duty and delight to exert every effort to contribute to your consolation and happiness during the rest of your days."

While the servant was presenting the company with fruit, cakes, and sweetmeats, the arrival of the Rev. Mr. Lovejoy was announced, and being introduced, he, with great affability, addressed the old lady: "Madam, although I perceive your family around you, I hope I may not intrude by my morning visit. It is generally known in our village that this is your birthday, completing your seventieth year. Your benevolence to the poor, and your friendly intercourse with the few who are rich among us, have made you a subject of general conversation this morning; and many good wishes have been expressed that you may yet continue to enjoy health, and every other blessing, to crown your journey's end. Sharing in this public impression, I have taken the liberty to call and personally offer you my cordial wishes for your self and family."

Mrs. Livingston replied, "Your visit to me, Mr. Lovejoy, is highly acceptable, and no doubt is equally

so to all my surrounding family. I sensibly feel the good wishes of my neighbors, and they have mine in return. To you, Sir, I offer my thanks for your visit, and I hope your life may long be preserved to cherish your family, and that your ministerial usefulness may be continued for very many years to the people of this village. True, my heavenly Father has given me seventy years, but all the rest that may come I shall receive as a loan on demand. And while I wish perpetually to say, 'Lord, my times are in thine hand,' I should be happy to make a better use of the loan than I have done of the gift."

On hearing her mother express such pious sentiments, Mrs. Watson was much impressed, and could not forbear saying, "My dear parent, we all hope that the loan may be a very long one, and that the same good hand which hath supported you so many years, will still continue to console and uphold you to the last hour."

"I doubt it not, my daughter," replied Mrs. Livingston, "He that hath done so much for me, will not forsake me, but will assuredly perfect that which concerneth me. I feel no anxiety on that account; the future I leave with the Lord, whether my days be many or few. My final departure I likewise most cheerfully submit to the pleasure of my blessed Saviour; the time when, place where, and the manner how, he shall send death for me, none of these give me a shadow of uneasiness. My Lord is infinitely wise, and cannot err; he is everlasting in his love, and I

cannot but be happy. My only wish is to walk humbly with my God, and bear some fruit to the honor of his name, until I pass out of time into eternity."

"Madam," said Mr. Lovejoy, "it affords me peculiar gratification to find you so composed, and cheerfully resigned to the will of your God. This morning I was reading the ninetieth Psalm, and when I came to the tenth verse, I instantly thought of your birthday. The words are, 'The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.' But, Madam, from the composure and cheerfulness of your mind, I hesitate to apply the latter part of the verse to you, for it describes the last stage of life to be 'labor and sorrow.'"

Mrs. Livingston felt the full force of this address, and immediately replied, "Sir, you know it is common for young people to be a little more lively on their birthday than usual, and why should not the aged rally the scattered forces of their animal spirits on such an occasion? Besides, I have so much to excite my gratitude to God, and seeing my children in health around me, that I cannot be covered with a gloomy mantle to-day. The text you have introduced has frequently been a subject of my meditation; but whether my reflections upon it be correct or not, I must confess, Sir, that no commentary which I have read gives precisely the same view of it that I have myself. I think the writer of that Psalm, said to be

Moses, merely describes the natural or animal life of man, and by so doing, he is very correct: For after a person has arrived to threescore years and ten, the infirmities and pains usually attendant on a decaying body, must necessarily make the latter end both 'labor and sorrow;' therefore, should my life be continued, it is probable I shall find it to be so. But, Sir, there is a corrective in the case. There is another, a spiritual life, of which every real Christian is possessed, and which can counterbalance the labor and sorrow of old age. Paul describes the case thus: 'though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.' 2 Cor. iv. 16. This is my hope and my consolation also, for I should be a miserable old woman if God had not given me this new life, and with it a good hope through grace, that when my natural life shall expire, I shall then be admitted to a life eternal. So you see I place the sentiment of Moses along side that of St. Paul, the one correcting and soothing the other; for while the body, the outward man, gradually perishes, the inward man, the renewed soul, daily grows stronger and stronger; and this happily shows the wise and good dispensation of God with his children in this vale of tears."

"I must confess, Madam," replied Mr. Lovejoy, "that your reflections upon that text are to me new and interesting. They certainly remove from it that gloomy veil we are apt to perceive upon it, and which has discouraged many aged persons when they contemplate the last stages of their earthly pilgrimage.

The rays of Christianity most fully illuminate the subject; and it is my fervent wish that you may realize them every day you may be permitted to live. I presume, Madam, that persons of your age must have passed through many changes, and collected no small share of information on the journey of life, the communication of which will not only give you pleasing employment in old age, but prove a source of instruction and encouragement to your children and friends, who would desire to follow your example."

"The changes in my pilgrimage," replied Mrs. Livingston, "have neither been so numerous or remarkable as in many others of my age. Yet notwithstanding my numerous sins and infirmities, I have witnessed abundant instances of the Lord's goodness and tender mercy, which are sufficient to clothe me with humility, and fill me with gratitude! Whenever I come to the mile-stone of my birthday, for many years past, I have been in the habit, not only of marking the number at which I arrived, but of writing underneath, 'hitherto the Lord hath helped me;' but still I little anticipated I should live to see the morning when I should read, as I now do, the number SEVENTY. Permit me to inform you, Sir, that although I have lived much in private, I have found great advantage from keeping a DIARY, which I frequently read; and although my own record often reminds me of my neglect and imperfections, it certainly aids me to remember the way in which the Lord my God hath led me. This is a practice which I cannot too highly recommend to

all my pious friends, especially to those in early life: for although, like my own, it will frequently speak loud against them, and reprove them for their remissness, still it will be found useful and necessary for their amendment. It will likewise be to them an admirable means of improving their faith, humility, and gratitude; exciting them to nearer communion with God, which, in my estimation, is the soul of religion; and however imperfectly such memorandums may be written, eventually they will exhibit the general features of a man's life, so that in old age he will esteem it in value next to his Bible, as it will contain the history of God's kind dispensations and dealings towards him. You will justify me, Sir, by saying, on this my birthday, that the greatest event recorded in my diary, is my new and spiritual birth to God, through the influence of his most blessed Spirit. Born in an easy station of life, like many other young persons, I was gay and thoughtless, but about my thirtieth year I hope the Lord changed my heart to know and serve him. When it pleased God to remove my husband by death, he so sanctified that bereaving stroke, that I attained greater evidence of interest in my Redeemer; and through my widowhood the Lord has been my heavenly Husband and never-failing portion. My Bible is my charter, my directory, and the cabinet of my spiritual jewels, which leads me to my Saviour, and from whence I daily draw my strength and my consolation. I readily confess, that all the afflictions which I have endured have been in mercy and loving-kind-

ness, although at the time they were inflicted I really did not think so. My greatest sorrows have sprang from the evils of my own heart, in so often departing from the Lord, whom I wished to love and serve! And now, if I can say nothing else, I hope I can with sincerity this morning adopt the confession of the apostle, that 'to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.'"

"My dear mother," said Mrs. Watson, "our conversation this morning has taken that impressive turn which affords us inexpressible delight. Will you permit me to suggest the wish of my heart? As the Rev. Mr. Lovejoy has favored you with this visit, may he now be requested, in the name of your family, to return thanks to Almighty God for the preservation and comforts which, for so many years, you have enjoyed?" With this request, Mr. Lovejoy devoutly complied; and after they had sung the following appropriate lines, the company immediately retired.

'Tis but a few whose days amount  
To threescore years and ten;  
And all beyond that short account  
Is sorrow, toil, and pain.

Almighty God, reveal thy love,  
And not thy wrath alone;  
Oh let our sweet experience prove  
The mercies of thy throne!

Our souls would learn the heav'nly art  
To improve the hours we have,  
That we may act the wiser part,  
And live beyond the grave.

WATTS.

P. S. The pious Mrs. Watson returned to her residence in the evening of that day indulging the tender emotions of her heart, in consequence of the morning visit she had paid to her venerated mother. These were too full to be retained in her own bosom, and therefore it is supposed she gave vent to her feelings by writing the following lines, which we insert for the gratification of the reader.

Hail, happy day ! more dear to me  
Than any other day can be ;  
For this the birthday is of thee,  
My Mother.

For when thy kindness I review,  
I ne'er can pay the tribute due !  
So much I have receiv'd from you,  
My Mother.

Yet from my birth unto this day,  
How prone my thoughtless feet to stray :  
Though taught the right and lawful way,  
By Mother.

But O ! forgive these follies past ;  
In silent shade let them be cast,  
For I shall love unto the last,  
My Mother.

O yes, believe, while I declare,  
My fervent wish, my constant prayer,  
Is that our God thy life my spare,  
My Mother.

That many birthdays you may see,  
And each return more happy be,  
Is all that I can wish for thee,  
My Mother.



## TRIMMING THE LAMP.

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Ye servants of the Lord,  
Each in his office wait,  
Observant of his heavenly word,  
And watchful at his gate.

Let all your lamps be bright,  
And trim the golden flame ;  
Gird up your loins, as in his sight,  
For holy is his name.

DODDRIDGE.

**TRIMMING** the lamp is a well-known Scripture emblem for reviving religion in the heart, and as necessary to maintain a correct public profession of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Among other passages which might be selected to instruct us on this subject, you will read our Lord's address to his disciples, recorded in Luke xii. 35, 36, which well applies to the heart ; and also the parable of the ten virgins, recorded in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew, which describes a public profession of religion. The arguments to enforce both of these are, the sudden expectation of the Bridegroom, and the imperious necessity of being prepared to meet him. In no stage of human life is the duty

of trimming the lamp so necessary as in old age, because every day that passes, and every pain that is felt, cry aloud, "Behold! the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him." Upon this serious and solemn consideration, I am disposed to offer a few thoughts, which I hope may stimulate the reader to trim his lamp, and be more habitually prepared to meet his Lord whenever he shall come.

A lamp is a well-known vessel, made of brass or other metal, to hold oil, for the purpose of feeding a wick, which, when lighted, gives a light to all around. The *lamp* well describes the heart of man; the *oil* is the grace of Christ's holy spirit; the *wick* is the spirit of man, or, as Solomon expresses it, "the spirit of a man is the candle of the Lord." Prov. xx. 27. This lamp is of God's own preparation, and first begins to burn when the Lord is pleased to regenerate the soul, and convert the man from the error of his ways, to walk before God in the paths of truth and holy obedience. Therefore the Lord said unto his disciples, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." How necessary is it for us to examine if we possess the lamp of God's own making, else our profession is in vain, and we shall prove like the foolish virgins, when their lamps went out, when the door was shut, and they were left in hopeless darkness! No lamp can be found but what in due time needs trimming, and replenishing with fresh oil; and the longer it is used, these operations become the

more necessary, just so it is with us in the last stages of a long life. I will now describe the process of trimming and replenishing the lamp.

I. The first is inspection or examination, for without this the lamp may imperceptibly burn down, and the light grow dim, if not be ready to expire. This is so common a case in the life of a Christian, that one would think it scarce necessary to cite a proof. You know that David, being off his guard, his lamp was nearly ready to expire. We cannot forget Peter, who, though his lamp once burned exceeding bright, forgetting himself and his character as a disciple, entered into the high priest's hall, mixed with bad company, and the foul air nearly extinguished his lamp. So pernicious are negligence, cowardice, presumption, and evil communications! Against these the best Christian needs to be upon his guard, and must frequently examine his lamp, ever bearing in remembrance, that in proportion to our estimation of the necessity and pleasure of spiritual light, so will be our watchfulness to keep our lamp burning. You know that our Lord frequently admonished his disciples on the imperious necessity of watchfulness, urging as a strong excitement, that they knew "not the day, nor the hour, in which the Son of man cometh." Is it not for the want of circumspection and watchfulness, that so many aged Christians neglect their lamps, complain of the darkness of their minds, and

the uncomfortableness of their feelings, in prospect of death and eternity ?

**II.** The next thing in trimming the lamp is, to raise the decayed wick, and separate the dead snuff, without which the wick will not receive the touch of fire to make it burn. To perform this operation on the lamps in the ancient tabernacle and temple, there were snuffers of pure gold provided, and it was unlawful for any to use them but the priests in office. Ex. xxxvii. 23. You will easily perceive that what this dead wick is to the lamp, which prevents its burning, so are the earthly-mindedness and carnal dispositions of the heart to the spirit of a Christian, which needs to be mortified and separated ; for as David said, “If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.” Ps. lxi. 18. Every one, who by grace, is made a priest unto God, and serveth the Lord Christ, considereth it his duty to watch his lamp, and by the hand of his faith, to perform this spiritual operation. He believes and feels that any sinful disposition, like the dead, filthy part of the wick, prevents the lamp of his spirit from burning ; he knows too that the flame of God’s love will not touch this dead wick ; it must be separated ; and he believes likewise that Christ can guide and strengthen his hand to mortify the flesh, that his spirit may be quickened, and his lamp burn with brightness. For this man practically learns that he is incapable of subduing the least evil propensity, and that “without Christ he can do nothing ;” but with him, “he can do

all things." Happy, therefore, is he who knows the use and value of these snuffers to trim his lamp, for they are more valuable than the gold that perisheth! It does not follow that because a man has grown old, and is about to leave the world, that therefore he has lost his relish for it, and has withdrawn his attachment from its concerns, for it too often happens that such a person grows more worldly. Nor dare we exempt some aged professors of religion from this undue attachment to the trifling cares of life. But after all, it is the decayed wick of the lamp, it is the ashes defiled by smoke, and must be cut off, or the lamp will give little or no light in the dark passage of mortality. However it may be with a person's external circumstances, there is enough in every Christian's heart which, if indulged, is sufficient to prevent his lamp from shining, and some feel this more than others. Unbelief, pride, vainglory, and evil tempers; neglect of prayers and of reading the Scriptures; and yielding to slothful habits; all these are calculated to injure the lamp of the heart, and shut out the light of knowledge, peace, and joy. You have no need to be reminded that such a lamp needs frequent trimming and replenishing with fresh oil.

III. No lamp can be sufficiently trimmed without communicating to it fresh oil, and it is of importance for us to know where that kind of oil can be procured which is necessary to supply the lamp of a Christian's heart. The oil used for the lamps in the tabernacle

was pure olive oil beaten, and was an expressive emblem of the spiritual oil which can feed the lamp of the soul; and therefore the grace of the Holy Spirit is called the "oil of gladness." The Lord Messiah is represented in the fourth chapter of Zachariah by the olive tree, the branches of which empty the golden oil out of themselves, through the golden pipes, into the empty bowl upon the top of the candlestick, to feed its seven lamps. A beautiful and expressive emblem is this to describe the fulness of Christ, which the Holy Spirit communicates like pure oil to the empty bowl of the believer's heart, in order to make his lamp to burn. To this source you must apply for sacred oil to supply the lamp of your experience and profession; and how great is the encouragement which the Saviour gives you, that the "heavenly Father giveth his Spirit to them that ask him?" And although your lamp may have been replenished with this holy oil many thousand times, and now burns dim, yet you are assured, that the Lord "giveth more grace," and on application you will not be denied; so that you may trim your lamp afresh, and go forth to meet the Bridegroom.

IV. By reminding you of some of the benefits and pleasures of having your lamp burning bright, I shall close this paper. Certainly you will see your path the better, and avoid those incumbrances in the way which have caused so many to stumble and fall. Your example will have a most happy effect upon

others. You will honor your profession, and enjoy more peace and happiness than those whose lamps are dim and expiring. When the foolish virgins arose to trim their lamps, they had gone out, and they could obtain no supply from those that were wise, therefore do you find the way to the fulness of the Saviour, and your lamp will not finally go out. The same Lord who required his disciples to let their lights be burning, also said, "Let your loins be girded about;" and Peter, taking the admonition from Christ, exhorts to "gird up the loins of your mind," which St. Paul explains, by "having your loins girt about with truth." This girdle of truth is far superior to the girdle worn by the Jewish high priest, though it was made of purple, fine twined linen, and richly embroidered, for that was a part of the vestments for the body, and taught the superior excellence of the girdle of truth for the mind, without which our pretensions and profession of religion are vain. Now you know that a man cannot gird himself correctly in the dark; and in proportion as your lamp burns, so will you observe your Lord's command, and fix the girdle of truth more correctly around you, which will answer the most valuable purposes. As an aged person you must imperceptibly grow feeble, and you need some expedient to aid you in walking, and much more so do you need the girdle of truth to enable you to walk humbly with your God and Saviour the short distance you have to reach your heavenly home. Besides the decay of your animal frame, you meet with trials peculiar to your advanced

age, which are calculated to make you feeble-minded; and if, as Solomon says, the “grasshopper is a burden,” what a necessity is there for your light to burn, and the girdle to be close girt, in order to aid you to finish your course with joy? The Bridegroom’s speedy approach forms a strong argument for your constant habitual preparation to meet him, for “blessed are those servants whom the Lord, when he cometh, shall find watching.” The signal of approach you may have already heard, for when he cometh he “knocketh.” Every pain of your enfeebled body, and every fainting fit of your animal spirit, is a *knock* at the door; and eventually the gristly hand of death shall grasp the knocker, and give the final signal, to call you away to the mansions of rest and eternal felicity.



## THE AGED COUPLE.

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Full many a year the happy couple trod  
The path of grace, which led them to their God;  
Old Age at length its tott'ring visit paid,  
While each on other's arm reclin'd for aid.  
God, ever faithful to his charge and love,  
Smil'd on their souls, and welcom'd them above.

CONNEXIONS formed in social life are designed by the Almighty for the good of the whole human family, but that which claims the pre-eminence is the marriage union, especially when contracted in the fear of God, which never fails to yield its thousand sweets. Different are the periods of life when the connubial bond is formed, and its history, if I may so say, admits of an astonishing variety. When this hallowed knot is tied in the bloom of youth, and a long succession of years are anticipated, how frequently the tyrant death strikes his dart, and the marriage bed is exchanged for the cold grave! If spared to the meridian of life, or arriving at the age of fifty, it seldom happens but that one or the other of the happy pair is taken away, and leaves the survivor to water the remaining path of life with

tears. Very few indeed are permitted to see old age, and fewer still who formed a union in early life, continue together, like "Zacharias, an old man, and his wife Elizabeth well stricken in years." Luke i. 18. Yet it is possible that this volume may find its way into some family where such an aged couple reside, and to whom a few reflections and advices may be acceptable, and thus contribute to make their last days still more refreshing and happy.

I. Let me recommend you frequently and devoutly to reflect on the indulgent hand of God upon you; the greatness of his forbearance, long-suffering, and tender mercy, in your preservation together for so many years; and let your humility and gratitude bear some good proportion to the favors which you have received. In the course of your long lives, you may have attended many weddings, and the parties, after living a few years together, one or both of them have gone to their graves, yet you are spared. It is equally possible, you may recollect, that one or other of you were laid upon a sick bed, and in your own apprehension, as well as in the opinion of your friends and attending physicians, death was about to dissolve the marriage union, and the survivor be left to mourn. But the Lord remembered you in your low estate, raised you up again, and has now continued you together to walk in the shades of old age. This certainly should excite your gratitude to God, and encourage you to take your last steps with more abundant confidence and joy! Besides,

you may recollect the pleasing society you enjoyed with many in your family and neighborhood, and where are they now? Like a cloud they have passed away to their graves, to return no more to their habitations; and their houses and possessions have passed into other hands. In the church too, how many of your pious associates, either blooming in profession, or bearing rich fruit to the praise of the Redeemer, have been transmitted to immortality! so that if you look around you, it is probable you will perceive very few of your old companions left, while you are permitted to survive them. Perhaps God may have spared your children to be earthly comforts and supports to you in the winter of your old age. If so, you are under additional obligation to bless the indulgent hand of your heavenly Father. But if these natural props have failed you, you are still under the greatest obligation that God permits you both still to live together; for although children are dear to their parents, I must confess that the affectionate union between the father and mother is much stronger, and in the declining day is far more valuable. From all these considerations on the way in which the Lord your God hath led you, you are bound to honor his blessed name by devout resignation, and to learn to sing the Lord's song of praise in the last days of your pilgrimage on earth, in hope of glory and immortality.

II. I mentioned Zacharias and Elizabeth, who lived together to very great age; I may also name Abraham

and Sarah, who were highly favored by the Lord their God. True, they were Israelites, but they looked for the same promised Messiah, the Son of God, who was to come and make himself an offering for sin, and to be the hope of their salvation; equally so as we do to him who has come and completed the great work of man's redemption. When, therefore, it is said in Luke i. 5, that "Zacharias and Elizabeth were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless," their righteous character was not formed as the result of their own merit, but they were constituted so by faith in the Messiah, as the LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS, through whom their persons were justified and accepted; and their blameless walk in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord was the evidence of the genuineness of the truth of their faith and affection. This is the only foundation on which the righteous build their hope, and the fruitful source of all grace, mercy, and peace; and therefore Paul so ardently wished for himself, "that I may be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." Phil. iii. 9. I hope this is the foundation on which you rest your confidence, and that you evidence its reality, by walking in all the commandments and ordinances of Jesus Christ, with piety, spirituality, and without blame. For an aged couple who have lived so many years together, and yet been strangers to God, without

Christ, and without hope in this world of sin and misery, when they are just going out of it to an eternal world, is a case deeply to be deplored! But how delightful if you mutually rest by faith on the merits of Jesus Christ, the rock of ages! You will then fear no storm. His love and power will sustain you under the despondency incident to increasing infirmities, while at the same time you will convince all around you of the intrinsic value of religion, and of the felicity of an aged couple walking together in the fear and love of their Saviour.

III. Although perhaps you have no need to be reminded of it, yet I cannot forbear adverting to the sympathy and forbearance which each of you owe to the other, in proportion as your infirmities and pains advance; for unless you are supported by the influence of the grace of the Lord Jesus, and your natural tempers are remarkably amiable, you will find great need of kindness and forbearance towards each other. In early life you may have had few personal embarrassments to prevent your mutual tenderness and love; and while in the more active stages of your journey, you could more easily support yourselves under your worldly sorrows, but now old age seconds the admonition, and calls you to "bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." These burdens you will find to be of a very different kind from any you have hitherto felt, demanding that sympathy and those numerous expressions of kindness which the temper,

and a thousand attendants on your decay of life demand! A couple of such spiritual lively dispositions may contribute to each other's peace and happiness, far exceeding all other aids that can possibly be named. The dregs of the cup of life are hereby sweetened, and it is devoutly wished that you may realize its sweetness to your mutual joy.

IV. If serious, lively conversation be esteemed gratifying to the aged, let me recommend you occasionally to repeat to each other the history of your own lives. This you may easily separate, as into so many chapters or small volumes; such as the events of divine Providence; your afflictions and mercies; your former state of ignorance; your change by the efficacious grace of God; the many refreshings you have enjoyed in the sanctuary of the Lord, by his word, his ministers, and his ordinances, not forgetting the circumstances of your marriage union, when you promised to love and serve the Lord together "until death shall part you." All these, and numberless other instances of the Lord's goodness, should be brought to your recollection. Indeed you cannot be in want of subjects to interest your conversation, excite your gratitude, promote your humility, and strengthen your confidence in the Lord; and of course this practice will not fail to make you more cheerful and happy together.

V. The advice of St. Peter in his first Epistle, iii.

7, is certainly designed to promote domestic felicity, and is especially directed to the husband and wife. "Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honor unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered." Whether you are surrounded with a family or not, you may both derive much satisfaction from observing this apostolic injunction. It may be presumed no pious couple can realize this admirable description of themselves, as "heirs together of the grace of life," which they have received from the Lord, without at the same time attempting to perform the duties required. The husband dwelling with his wife, not as careless, but as wise, improving that spiritual wisdom which is from above, by which he will delight to give the most salutary instructions to his wife, which will not fail to promote their mutual advantage. And although the wife be "the weaker vessel," as Peter calls her, and made still more so by the infirmities of age, yet by the kind and wise attentions of her husband, she may be so strengthened in the performance of her domestic and religious duties, as that the feeble vessel may be filled with peace, comfort, joy, and happiness. One great design, by St. Peter's admonition, is that "the prayers" of this married couple "be not hindered." In addition to public prayer in the church, and social prayer in the family, which are the duty and the privilege of all Christians, I presume the Apostle intended to remind them of their private mu-

tual prayer with each other as man and wife. This duty, I fear, is not held in the estimation it deserves, and is too much neglected. But if they are indeed heirs together of the grace of life, and love each other in the Lord, how can they neglect praying together in private to that blessed Father who, in Christ, by the influence of his holy Spirit, is the fountain and giver of that grace of life which they profess to have received, and which is a certain earnest of eternal life hereafter? Let me therefore urge this duty upon you, and you will speedily find it to be an invaluable privilege. Frequently retire together to your chamber. You can there in solemn prayer more freely express your mutual wants, your fears, your feelings, and your desires, before the throne of God. While you find this sacred employment a source of mutual consolation and pleasure under your last conflicts, the Lord will hear your supplications, and grant you a more abundant sense of his loving-kindness, which is better than life; and thus make your marriage union more gratifying and delightful than when it first commenced.

VI. In addition to the salutary advice of St. Peter to the married couple, I cannot persuade myself to omit St. Paul's charge to Titus concerning the duties which he was to enjoin, both upon aged men and aged women, whether they were husband and wife or not; at any rate, they are supposed to be professors of the Lord Jesus. The admonitions are as follows:—"But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine:



that the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience. The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness; not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; that they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed." Titus ii. 1-5. On the several parts of these verses I will make a short comment. The aged men are exhorted to be sober. If intemperance, by strong drink, is criminally disgraceful to a man, it is more so to a professor of religion, and most of all in an old man. I wish there were no cause for this admonition, and hope it is unnecessary to the aged reader; for in whomsoever this vice is indulged, it breeds many other evils, becomes a stumbling-block to Christians around him, and creates a strong suspicion of his unregeneracy and hypocrisy. That the aged Christian should be grave, certainly comports with his years, the deeper knowledge he is presumed to attain of his own heart, the result of his abundant afflictions, and the solemn thought of his speedily passing out of time into eternity. He is exhorted to be temperate, not only in dress and economy, but in his disposition, giving advice to others on cool reflection, and to be so in his general deportment, whether at home or abroad. That he should be sound in faith, for it would be a subject of deep lamentation if an aged professor of religion should be unsettled in the

truths of the Gospel and in his own experience, and much more so if he should abound with errors, as his head is covered with gray hairs. But for a man to have been many years in the school of Christ, taught by his word and Spirit, his mind well stored with sound doctrine, bearing the rich fruit of faith; it is charming to see such a one so rooted and steadfast in the truths of the everlasting Gospel, that his holy, humble confidence, increases with his years. He is likewise exhorted to charity, for this is called the bond of perfectness, and which should not fail to expand itself to relieve the poor and needy, according to the ability which God giveth. There is also a charitable disposition which should be excited towards those pious persons who, in their public profession, may choose to differ in some external forms from his own practice. In this matter I make no hesitation in saying, that a censorious or covetous old man can have little pretensions to the character of a christian. *Patience* is the last requisite named by the apostle; and certainly when we recollect the numberless infirmities incident to the aged, the ordinary disappointments and afflictions attendant on human life; and the decline of animal spirits, which makes the most trifling circumstance a burden; how important it is then to cherish and cultivate this heavenly virtue! Our Lord admonishes us "In your patience possess ye your souls." From the men let us look at the advice for the women. "The aged women likewise, that they may behave as becometh holiness." If meekness,

modesty, kindness, and faithfulness, be deemed the personal virtues which adorn the female character, it is particularly expected in an aged professor of religion, that she behave as becometh holiness, for such a one hopes she has been called with an holy calling, and to walk with an holy God. The principles of grace are all holy, and bring forth their fruit unto holiness, and the end is everlasting life. All these considerations will have their due effect upon the heart, temper, and conduct of every virtuous old woman, whether she be rich or poor. Aged females are forbidden to be "false accusers;" such persons never failing to have more to do by prying into the character of others than their own; though it is generally the case that when such an ungodly censorious spirit is indulged, it produces much mischief in a family, in a church, or in a neighborhood, and eventually it terminates in the disgrace of the slanderer. "Not given to much wine," for if intemperance be disgusting in an old man, it is much more odious in an old woman. This advice of St. Paul to aged women, may be called personal, and if properly improved in the fear of God, will certainly enrich and exalt the female character. He then names others of a more social kind. He says, they should be "teachers of good things." Who are so likely to instruct younger persons as those aged women who have passed through the duties and trials of a long life, enjoyed the good things of the Gospel, and whose maternal tempers are formed of Christian kindness and love? Among other good things they are to teach

“the young women to be sober,” that is, temperate, steady, frugal, and industrious in their general conduct, corresponding with St. Paul’s advice, in the ninth verse, to young men, that they be “sober-minded.” “To love their own husbands,” for although the marriage union requires such affection, still they are to be on their guard, so as to give no cause for suspicion or jealousy ; conducting towards their husbands with faithfulness, kindness, and affection under all circumstances. “To love their children,” which is a principle indeed dictated by reason, near relationship, the law of nature, and the law of God, which, with the blessing of the Lord, where such affectionate government is maintained over children, without giving them unjustifiable indulgencies, is the most promising way, to raise a happy family and prepare it for heaven. St. Paul next requires that young women “be discreet, chaste, keepers at home,” that is, not perpetually visiting nor gadding about, which conduct, while it wastes time and exposes to censure, seldom fails to neglect and derange their families, and eventually brings discredit on themselves, and is certainly inconsistent with domestic peace and happiness. That they be *good*. Perhaps this may combine and express the intrinsic value of all the other virtues in one group, or it may signify a good will to domestics, and all other branches of the family, so that we may say with Solomon, “whoso findeth a good wife, findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favor of the Lord.” Prov. xviii. 22. To all which the apostle adds, “obedient to their own hus-

bands," agreeably to their marriage contract, and so as to be under no subjection to the husbands of others. This obedience in all just things, as the Lord requires, instead of making the marriage life a slavery, will consolidate their union, and promote the peace, harmony, and happiness of each other. The apostle enforces the whole of these admonitions, by giving his reason for them, which is, "that the word of God be not blasphemed." For the word of God enjoins all such moral and social duties, censures the neglecters and violators of them; and whenever ungodly persons have occasion to witness the violation of these precepts by persons professing religion, they eagerly catch the occasion to blaspheme the good word and ways of the Lord. If these advices of Paul are necessary to young persons, whether men or women, they come with a stronger appeal to you as an aged couple. Especially if God should have spared your children, and their children around you, such admonitions repeated from your lips, and enforced by your example as their grandfather and grandmother, may promote their best advantage.

VII. I will conclude by assuring the aged couple that by walking together in the fear and presence of the Lord, you will not only find an adequate support under the weight of your declining years, but likewise a corrective to your painful thoughts of parting with each other at the call of death; nor will it then be of so much consequence which goes first, whether the

husband or wife. The Lord, who first brought you together, and united you in marriage, certainly knows the best time, and he will ordain the most proper means for dissolving the knot, and for a short season to separate you from each other. The survivor will not sorrow as one that hath no hope, "for if you believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also will God bring with him," and you will be mutual sharers of the Redeemer's glory. Forget not that your Saviour is everlasting in his love to you. His righteousness, in which you trust, answers all demands against you ; and the good hope, through grace, which he has given you, shall not make you ashamed. You have your heavenly Father's house to go to, where you will be free from sin and sorrow, personally know and enjoy each other, and where you will be in the immediate presence of God and the Lamb for ever. Therefore comfort one another with these cheering hopes, and let me recommend the admonition of Jude to your serious consideration. "Ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." Ver. 20, 21. Amen.

How blest the pair whom Christian love unites !  
Joy smiles upon their days and crowns their nights :  
In peace their happy moments glide away,  
Till both are welcom'd to eternal day.

## THE LAST DAYS OF MOSES.

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Sweet was the journey to the sky,  
This wondrous prophet tried ;  
“ Climb up the mount,” says God, “ and die.”  
The prophet climb'd and died.

Softly his fainting head he lay  
Upon his Maker's breast ;  
His Maker kissed his soul away,  
And laid his flesh to rest.

MOSES was the son of Amram and Jochebed. He was born in Egypt in the year of the world 2433, and died in the wilderness, on the summit of Mount Nebo, 2553, when he was within sight of Canaan, the promised land. He was the most extraordinary man recorded in the Old Testament. The circumstances attending his infancy; his remarkable preservation; his introduction to the court of Pharaoh; his education and his sublime genius; his appointment by the Lord to be the deliverer of the Israelites, and the accomplishment of that great event; likewise the office which he sustained as lawgiver, prophet, mediator, guide, historian, judge, and general of so vast

a number of people, under the most discouraging circumstances in the wilderness for nearly forty years; all these mark the greatness of his character. Besides, this man of God received such abundant grace and favor from the Almighty, which filled him with profound reverence, and inspired him with such devotion, that it is said of him, "the Lord spake unto Moses, face to face, as a man speaketh to his friend." Ex. xxxiii. 11. To crown the whole of what is recorded concerning this distinguished person, Moses was a most eminent type of the promised Messiah, the Son of God; and likewise at the command of God he was institutor of all those ancient rites, consisting of sacrifices and offerings, which should be as shadows, and lead on the way to the great sacrifice, "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." No wonder, therefore, that the last days of so extraordinary a man should be so strongly marked, and so admirably calculated to afford us the most instructive lessons; and more especially to an aged Christian drawing near to the Jordan of death. Under this impression I shall make a selection of a few of the more prominent parts of the latter end of Moses, and draw from them such reflections as may convey to you some serious lessons of instruction.

I. The cause of Moses dying in the wilderness. Two reasons may be assigned for this event. At the waters of Miribah the children of Israel strove with Moses for the want of water, and the Lord commanded



him to strike the rock to give them a supply. He did so; but as it was in a manner and in a temper which was displeasing to the Lord, he therefore spake unto Moses and Aaron, saying, "Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them." Num. xx. 12. This is designed to teach you that God requires obedience to his commands in the exact form and order in which he prescribes them: and that he marks the temper and disposition of those who, like Moses, "find grace in his sight." The sins of the tongue are many, and sometimes very great, both in the young and the aged; therefore, like David, incessantly pray, "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips." The other reason why Moses could not carry the people into the land of promise is, that he was the giver of that law of God which he, as well as all mankind, have transgressed; and therefore we must be indebted to the hand of another to conduct us to the land of everlasting rest. Moses, therefore, dies, and is succeeded by Joshua, who safely conducted the people over Jordan, and placed them in Canaan. We too, as Paul expresses it, must "die unto the law, that we live unto God;" for we have a Joshua, Jesus a Saviour (their names being both alike in signification), who, for his people having obeyed the law and borne its penalties, and thereby obtained eternal redemption for us, becomes the glorious leader, through death, to an eternal inheritance in heaven.

Let this admonish you to examine the ground and reason for your hope beyond the grave. If it be on your supposed obedience to the law, which the Scripture and your conscience bear witness you have transgressed, your hope is false, and death, with all its evil, will ensue; but if it be alone upon the merit of the law fulfiller, Jesus, the Saviour, that you rest, your hope is firm, and your salvation sure.

II. Moses when he died was 120 years old, his life being divided into three remarkable periods. Forty years he lived in Egypt; forty years he retired to Midian; and forty he was with the people in the wilderness. Although this division of time was so remarkable in the life of this great and good servant of the Lord, and perhaps no other like it can be found in the world; still, if an aged Christian, with care, reviews the history of his own life, and the periods which have attended it, the retrospect may afford him unexpected satisfaction, and inspire him with gratitude to the Lord; for this is one way of numbering our days, and applying our hearts to wisdom. Let me, therefore, recommend you to engage in this desirable reflection; and whether it may relate to your natural, or to your spiritual life, or both together, it is probable you may discover some marks, divisions, and incidents, which to you may prove valuable and interesting. At any rate, the result will tend to clothe you with humility, to remind you of the way which the Lord your God hath led you, so as to produce pious acknowledg-

ments, and prompt you to say, "All my times are in thine hands." In addition to this, it will make you the more calm and resigned in whatever future events may attend you, and aid you to commit to the hand of the Lord, the time, place, manner, and circumstances, allotted for your death.

**III. His call to death.** While Moses was employed in his important duty of instructing the Israelites, the Lord said unto him, "Behold, the days approach that thou must die." Deut. xxxi. 14. Solemn call! Yet Moses, the man of God, asked not for a respite from the grave. Having "found grace in the sight of the Lord," and knowing his wisdom in appointing the seasons of life and death, he shuddered not at his voice, but submissively yielded to the command, and employed his few remaining days in the necessary preparation for the solemn event. Although we possess an assurance that we must die, and the day rapidly advances, yet when, by the voice of Providence, we receive a premonition, whether by casualty, disease, or the increasing infirmities of advanced age, that there is "but a step between us and death," nature is disposed to recoil. How necessary is it then to determine the fact, if we also, like Moses, have found grace in the sight of the Lord? If so, it will cast rays of light upon the grave, stimulate us to set our house in order, and to practise the admonition of Jesus, recorded in the twelfth chapter of Luke. "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that

wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that, when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately." For "blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching." Few can say, "My lamp burneth bright; I am ready; I have not any thing more to do but to die; come Lord Jesus, come quickly." For although an hope of interest in Christ be firm, and a lively expectation of immortality inspire the breast, there is yet generally something to adjust in the heart, in the family, or in our station, which demands our serious and pious activity. The Christian being thus ready for death, will not make the enemy advance the sooner, but most assuredly make his appearance the easier, if not the more desirable. Let these reflections impress the mind, and actuate the heart of my aged reader; and instead of either indifference or dismay, you will, with cheerfulness, make ready for your journey to your heavenly Father's home, and be found of him in peace.

IV. The natural strength of Moses at the time of his death, was very remarkable. "His eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated." Deut. xxxiv. 7 This appears the more extraordinary as he lived forty years beyond the then limited time of human life. Psalm xc. 10. His eyes were not dim as those of Isaac's, though Moses, as a lawgiver and an historian, had written much, which usually produces an unfavorable effect upon the sight. Notwithstanding the con-

flict of the mind in governing so large a body of people for so great a length of time, under numberless vexations and trials, with the extreme bodily fatigue which he must have endured in his marches in the dreary wilderness; notwithstanding all these, he retained his full strength of body and mind to the very last. While we attribute his wonderful preservation to the good hand and pleasure of God upon him, yet we cannot but confess that the evenness of his mind, and the placidity of his temper, which he never lost but once, had the most favorable effect upon his intellectual powers to the end of his days. Very few persons in the present age, having only passed through the ordinary occurrences of life, and arrived at threescore years and ten, can bear any comparison with the strength of Moses. But let those who are in any degree thus favored, seriously remember the great obligation they are under to their Preserver, and piously devote the remainder of their time and abilities to the good of their fellow creatures, as did Moses the servant of the Lord. Still as the body, in the variety of its parts, is so formed as to bear some resemblance to the faculties of the soul, I cannot but recommend the pious aged reader to make a spiritual application also of this subject to himself. Is your debility of body, sight, or mind, the reverse to that of Moses? and do you groan, being burdened with increasing infirmities? Then pass your reflections from the body to the state of your soul, and then ask if now when the "outward man" is thus perishing, whether

the "inward man is renewed day by day." 2 Cor. iv. 16. If your spiritual strength be firm in God, the eye of your faith fully fixed upon Christ, and your whole soul devoted to the worship and service of your Lord, happy are you. For "when your heart and flesh fail, God will be the strength of your heart, and your portion for ever." Psalm lxxiii. 26.

V. The affectionate solicitude of Moses for the people he was about to leave, is certainly no small part of this interesting subject. No sooner the warning of his speedy death was given, than Moses collected the tribes of Israel, and upon them pronounced his prophetic benediction, and to each he apportioned their lot of inheritance in the land of Canaan. Experience had taught him the necessity of a successor, who should be a guide to the people, and conduct them over Jordan to the promised land. For this he entreated the Lord, and Joshua was appointed. On these occasions all the fine feelings of the soul must have been strongly excited. Moses leaving the people whom he had so many years since delivered from bondage in Egypt, and whom he had conducted through the wilderness, and who lay near his heart; and the people taking a final leave of their invaluable guide and friend, to see his face no more, were circumstances of intense interest to both. Afflicting as was this parting both to Moses and to the Israelites, it reminds us that all our social connexions on earth must eventually be dissolved by the stroke of death. Let every thoughtful man, and especially per-

sons in advanced age, learn a lesson from the conduct of Moses, to adjust their earthly concerns, and they will assuredly leave them and their family with greater composure. Besides, it must be a source of satisfaction to leave faithful persons behind him as guardians of his family, like Joshua, who was a sort of executor to Moses, and who, with Eleazar, divided the land of Canaan to the respective tribes of Israel. Especially as Moses was a prophet and a teacher, sensibly feeling the religious interest of the congregation of the Lord, so in proportion will every aged faithful minister of the Gospel anxiously pray that the flock of his charge may be provided with an able and faithful shepherd, who shall feed them with the bread of life, preserve them in safety, and honor the Lord his God in the next generation.

VI. The work of Moses being completed, God commanded him to go up on Mount Abarim. This was a large range of mountains; the tops were of different heights, and called by different names. The particular part to which Moses was directed, bore the name of Nebo, which was over against Jericho, that lay on the other side of Jordan in the land of Canaan. There God designed to give him a sight of the promised inheritance, and then to close his eyes in death. Moses immediately obeyed; and notwithstanding his very advanced age, he arrived at Nebo, and then ascended Pisgah, which was the highest point of the mountain. Josephus and other Jewish writers say,

that "he was accompanied in his ascent by Joshua, Eleazar, and the elders of Israel;" but whether so or not, the Lord met him, and showed him the extensive land of promise, with its various boundaries. This I presume was the same "divine person, the angel of the Lord," who had appeared to him in the burning bush, spake to him face to face, with that familiarity with which a man speaketh to a friend, and who had crowned his whole life with so many distinguished favors. Of course, in his gracious presence Moses must have been delivered from the gloomy fear of death, and filled with the most exquisite joy! The sight of those distant lands must have confirmed his faith in the faithfulness of God, who had promised them to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, by covenant, while it inspired his confidence, cheerfully to commit his soul into the hand of his Lord, in prospect of that happy state in heaven which is truly called, "an inheritance among the saints in light." Colos. i. 12. We may therefore conclude, that although this distinguished servant of the Lord, in a long and diversified life, had seen many displays of the wisdom, power, and glory of the Almighty, yet the brightest scene was reserved for the day of his death, and in this sense "mortality to him was swallowed up of life." The pious aged Christian will not be persuaded to pass over this interesting part of the subject without a pause, nor fail to make some application of it to himself; for while we confess that those circumstances were peculiar in their application to Moses, it is with



confidence and pleasure we confess, so precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints, that he frequently indulges them with the assurances of his favor, and more delightful views, by faith, than before, of the promised rest and joys of heaven, just at the time when the Jordan of death appears in sight! Good Stephen, though dying beneath a shower of stones; and Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, while bound in chains by bloody Nero, forgot their sorrows, saw the heavens opened, and triumphed in prospect of a crown of glory that fadeth not away. May you, my aged friend, walk humbly with your God and Father in Christ, and “the good will of him that dwelt in the bush” will enable you to smile upon death; and according to the promise, “thine eyes shall see the King in his beauty; and thou shall behold the land that is very far off.” Isaiah xxxiii. 17.

O could we make our doubts remove,  
Those gloomy doubts that rise,  
And see the Canaan that we love,  
With unbecclouded eyes !

Could we but climb where Moses stood,  
And view the landscape o’er,  
Not Jordan’s stream, nor death’s cold flood  
Should fright us from the shore.

VII. We will add a few reflections on the death and burial of Moses. “So Moses, the servant of the Lord, died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord. And he buried him in a valley

in the land of Moab, over against Beth-peor : but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day." Deut. xxxiv. 5, 6. Yes, Moses, though an honored servant of the Lord, died ; and which of his servants may be excused from death ? Many have professed to be servants of the Lord, who eventually proved themselves unworthy that sacred character ; but Moses endured to the end, and his memory is here recorded in a manner more durable than a monument of brass or marble, as constituting the highest honor of man—**MOSES, THE SERVANT OF THE LORD**, though his grave be unknown. Moses died, not by what some call chance, or by the unavoidable infirmities of old age, but according to the word of the Lord. Indeed, the word of the Lord pronounced the sentence of death, as the demerit of sin upon all the human race, "Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return." He who had determined the time and circumstances of this great man's birth, the period for his rescuing Israel from the house of bondage, did likewise determine the moment of his death, and that period is unusually remarkable. It occurred on the seventh month, Adar, answering to our February, and on the Sabbath day at noon, the very time in which he was born ; so that his spirit was dismissed from the body on that day of holy rest, which had been so delightful to him in his life, in joyful expectation of keeping an eternal Sabbath with his Lord in glory ! In the original text it is, "and Moses died at the *mouth* of the Lord ;" which has given rise to a general opinion, both among Jew-

ish and Christian writers, that he died while in the action of a *kiss* from the Lord. This supposition I should immediately abandon, did I not believe that it was the same Lord, the promised Messiah, who had so often appeared to him in a human form ; and therefore now, in such a body, literally embrace the lips of his servant, as well as he had spoken to him face to face. At any rate, it is a lovely expression of the approbation and favor of the Lord to his servant in his last moment. You and I have no right to expect the personal presence of the Lord with us, when we come to our dying bed ; but let us pray that by the influence of God's Spirit, we may so live in near communion with Christ, that at our last hour we may enjoy the felicity of his approbation and smiles upon our departing spirits. The burial of Moses was altogether different from that of any other human being. "The Lord buried him." The place of his interment was "in a valley in Moab, over against Beth-peor." Some say this was performed by the ministry of angels, and most likely by Michael, which St. Jude mentions in the ninth verse of his Epistle. Of his sepulchre it is also said, "no man knoweth unto this day." Why this grave has been preserved in perpetual secrecy, has produced many conjectures ; but if the Lord buried Moses, he will certainly find his body in the morning of the resurrection. We know that the Israelites were prone to idolatry, and it is possible had they known the place of his burial, they might have made it an object of adoration. Let me say that the

secrecy of the grave of Moses was wisely ordained. He needed no splendid monument to be erected to his memory. The virtues and labors of his life are recorded in the book of God, and his final exit was marked by the approbation of heaven. Let this excite us to live like the servants of the Lord, and our own virtues will be recorded on high. Then to us it will be immaterial when or where we shall die, or where our bodies shall be buried. Perhaps I may not better conclude this paper than by the pious sentiments of the truly excellent Mr. Hervey. "Characters cut with a pen of iron, and committed to the solid rock, will ere long cease to be legible; but as many as are enrolled in the Lamb's book of life, he himself declares, shall never be blotted out from those annals of eternity. When a flight of years has mouldered the triumphal column into dust; when the brazen statue perishes under the corroding hand of time, those honors still continue, still are blooming and incorruptible in the world of glory." Therefore,

Make the extended skies your tomb,  
Let stars record your worth:  
Ye know, vain mortals, all must die,  
As nature's sickliest birth.

Would bounteous heaven indulge my pray'r,  
I frame a nobler choice;  
Nor living, wish the pompous pile,  
Nor dead, regret the loss.

## A MORNING'S VISIT

FROM DR. JOHNSON TO MRS. CRUIKSHANK.

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It was always a delightful part of my ministerial duty to visit the families of those who composed my congregation. I once called upon an aged woman who had long made a profession of religion. Although she received me cordially, it was too evident that she was under considerable embarrassment of mind. After accepting a chair, and making some general inquiries concerning the health of her family, I expressed my sentiments on the happiness of those who trusted in the Lord, and who enjoyed some share of the smiles of the blessed Saviour, especially in their advanced age.

“Yes, Sir,” said Mrs. Cruikshank, “that is very true, but it is not quite so with me. Last night I was thinking about David’s words, ‘Thou hast showed thy people hard things, and makest them drink of the wine of astonishment.’ Indeed I meet with many hard things, and my cup is full of affliction, and sometimes it runs over. Dear, Sir, I am *overloaded*, and wish I could obtain some relief, for I am an old woman, and cannot bear so many heavy things.”

“My friend,” replied the minister, “as you have lived so many years, you cannot but know that this world is full of sin and misery, but then the greater part of our afflictions chiefly arise from our own sinful natures. But notwithstanding this, you certainly must be convinced that the Saviour is full of compassion, and able to support his children under their heaviest afflictions. You are exhorted and encouraged in the Gospel to cast your burdens upon the Lord, with this good assurance, that ‘he will sustain you.’”

“Yes, to be sure, Doctor, what you say is very right, but for all that, I am so overloaded that my mind is confused; I cannot bear it much longer.”

“You say, Madam, that you are *overloaded*. By this, I suppose you to mean that you have more than your share of trouble, and that you would be contented to bear what you call a load, provided you had no more. If this be the case, I take it for granted, that you must have weighed or measured what you may call the over-part, as well as the load. I will ask you if God has informed you how much makes a load for you to bear? By so doing, I shall be the better able to offer you my advice on the over-part of your burden.”

“Why indeed, Sir,” said she, “one trouble comes after another, and makes the weight the greater, and it seems there is no end to them. I once had a sufficiency to support me, but not now; I had friends that were very kind, but now they seldom come near me; I have lost my eldest daughter by death, and my

only son has left me and gone to sea ; persons that owed me money have failed, and others promise to pay, but I can get nothing from them. All these things pinch me very much in my old age."

"I really sympathize with you under these changes and losses, Mrs. Cruikshank ; for they must be the more oppressive to persons in advanced age than to those in more early life. But as a professor of religion, it does not appear, if I may use your own expression, that you can say you are overloaded with patience and submission to the will of your heavenly Father. If you could see his hand in removing your children, and drying up the streams of earthly supplies, it would lead you to greater confidence in his providence, grace, and love ; while, with composure, you would meditate how very soon you may pass away from this world, no more to return."

"Well, well ! my good minister," replied Mrs. C. "I know what you say is right enough, but I must tell you, that when you knocked at my door I was a little out of humor, for you know that young people say that 'old folks are sooner put out of temper than others.' You must know, Sir, that my maid Betty had disobeyed my orders. I went very early this morning and bought the best pair of fowls in the market, and on my return ordered Betty to stuff and roast them very nicely ; but to please her own whim, and save herself the trouble, she put them both into the pot to boil."

"Certainly, Madam," said the Doctor, "your servant was to blame for disobeying your orders ; but

I much question whether good old Anna the prophetess, or either of the three Maries, whose names are recorded in the New Testament, would have allowed themselves to have been discomposed and put out of humor between roasting and boiling! However, I suppose that young people do not go very wide of the mark, when they imagine elderly people to be sooner discomposed than others, for certainly their nerves must grow feeble; and perhaps this may be more frequently the case with old ladies than with gentlemen."

"Well, to be sure, Sir," acknowledged Mrs. C. "we ought to be more upon our guard; and after all, perhaps it will not make very great odds about the boiling, for Betty is a very good cook, only she is apt to make a little too much sauce with her tongue. Wont you stay and dine with me to day? I shall, Sir, be extremely happy in your company."

The Doctor replied, "I sincerely thank you, Madam, for your invitation, but my previous engagements forbid my enjoying that pleasure, and I can stop with you but a few minutes longer. Permit me, therefore, my aged friend, to say that I have long entertained an opinion, that the world is to us as we are to it. I think I now see the reason why you are overloaded, for it does not appear that you are seriously resolved to derive strength from God to support you under your bereavements and disappointments; and I really wonder that your load does not feel heavier. You profess to be a worshipper in the Lord's house, but I am afraid you are too forgetful of him in your



own. I know the unavoidable infirmities of your age must have a serious effect upon your animal spirits, and that you are less able to bear the weight of earthly cares now than you were in younger days. Be assured, however, that God lays no greater burden upon his children than he will enable them to bear. I wish, therefore, you would seriously compose your mind, and see whether the burden may not be of your own making? If so, plead with God to give you grace to lay it aside; rest all your hope in the rich Saviour, and walk humbly and thankfully with your God, for it is a pity that an old woman should cling to the world just as she is going out of it."



## FALL OF THE LEAF.

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See the leaves around us falling,  
Dry and wither'd to the ground ;  
Thus to thoughtless mortals calling,  
In a sad and solemn sound.

Venerable sires grown hoary,  
Hither turn the unwilling eye,  
Think, amidst your falling glory,  
Autumn tells a winter nigh.

On the tree of life eternal,  
Man, let all thy hopes be stay'd ;  
Which, alone, for ever vernal,  
Bears a leaf that shall not fade.

BISHOP HORNE.

SCARCE anything around us gives a stronger intimation of approaching winter than the change and fall of the leaf; and few emblems can be selected more expressive of the natural and mental infirmities attendant on the last stages of human life. For “we all do fade as the leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, carry us away.” Isa. lxiv. 6. When our first parents, Adam and Eve, sinned against their Creator, they in vain covered themselves with fig-leaves; and no wonder

that, as sinners, our leaves should fall and drop into the dust of death. This fall of the leaf of man is very far from being always reserved to old age, for few comparatively reach that period. Youth, that "cometh up like a flower," producing the buds of intellect, and whose leaves afford the most exquisite delight to a parental heart, frequently suffers depredation by disease, the leaves fade and wither. In the meridian of life, the busy merchant, the wise statesman, the valiant warrior, the philosopher, and the divine, with every grade of society, rich or poor, may unexpectedly meet with a blast, their leaves fall, and the tree is levelled in death. The comparative few who are permitted to live and become familiar with old age, are still more competent to learn useful lessons on their own frailty, from the natural fall of the leaf in autumn. To assist your reflections upon this expressive emblem of declining age, I shall make a few observations upon the subject.

I. It will bring to your recollection your former standing and appearance in life. The tree produces its buds in the season of spring, gradually by the warming rays of the sun, aided by rain and dew, every branch is adorned with foliage, and flowers and fruit succeed. The intense heat of the summer, accompanied with occasional storms and tempests, so far from destroying the leaves, occasion a sort of perspiration, which promote their growth and beauty, while it materially contributes to the strength of the

twigs and of the tree which bears them. See then your own pictured life. You have had your genial season of youth, when your leaf was green. As a tree you have stood in your day and generation, passing the seasons of the sunshine of prosperity, and enduring the alternate storms of adversity; and happy will be your reflections, if by the fruits of righteousness you have honored and served your God, who hath so long continued you in life, and enabled you to contribute to the benefit of your fellow creatures. These will afford you pleasure when the autumn of life arrives, and the season admonishes you to contemplate the falling of the leaf.

II. Suppose we examine the causes of the falling of the leaf. At the season of autumn a great proportion of the vital sap of the tree, which has produced, nourished, and supported the leaf upon its twig, gradually descends to the root, leaving only a sufficiency in the branches for the preservation of life during the season of winter. It likewise may be added, that the gradual advance of a chilled and cold atmosphere, materially aids in changing the color of the leaf, and facilitating its fall. This is precisely the case in old age. The spring of animal life relaxes; the blood, which is the vital sap or fluid, grows cold and languid; the powers of the mind become heavy; while the whole system gradually becomes feeble; and, like the tree, so much life and animation are only retained as shall be sufficient to perform the last solitary functions

of expiring nature. Under such serious impressions as these, you no doubt frequently adopt the request of David, "Cast me not off in the time of old age : O Lord forsake me not when my strength faileth." Ps. lxxi. 9.

III. Leaves of a tree, in many respects, are equivalent to the use of lungs in the animal body. There are no leaves but what possess a vast number of extremely fine vessels, and to what purpose would be this arrangement if they were of no other use than merely to adorn the tree, please our eye, or afford us shade? For the fruitfulness of the tree materially depends upon its leaves, as the health of the body does upon the soundness and health of the lungs. The pores of the leaves serve to suck in the moisture of the atmosphere, the rain, and the dew, and to communicate them to the whole tree; and this is the reason why many trees wither and die after their leaves have been gathered. Admitting this analogy between the leaves of the tree and the uses of the lungs in the human body, we are confident that the lungs are as subject to diseases and decay, which eventually prove mortal, as the leaves of the tree first fade and then fall. The contemplation of this subject by an aged person, will easily aid him to account for the debility of his appetite, the failure of his voice, and likewise for what is generally called "the old man's cough."

IV. Attention to the process, observed in the

falling leaf, will afford you very serious lessons of instruction, as its similitude to the last stage of life is extremely expressive. No sooner does the sap of the tree begin to decline than the beautiful green of the leaf gradually vanishes, and is succeeded by a dusty brown. This speedily gives way to a pale death-like yellow, which is the last coloring before its fall. Who can look upon the face of an aged companion, or who frequently viewing his own face in a glass, but must observe these different grades of color successively passing upon the features? Justly did Job describe the case, when he said, "Thou changest his countenance and sendest him away." Whoever looks upon a leaf in this changing state, will readily perceive that the pulpy or fleshy part of the leaf is reduced and shrivelled, and thereby its fibres, like veins, become more prominent and visible; and is not this similar to the last days of man? The substance of the flesh is gradually wasted; the veins on his hand become more prominent, and form the striking picture of an aged person. The leaf in its prime could stand the strength of the storm, and weather out its rage, but now, in its enfeebled state, it trembles at the least breathing of the air, and merely hangs to meet its fall. Ah! what is feeble man in his last stage but as a withered leaf, driven to and fro by the wind! The days are gone in which he stood the blast and the tempest of the world. Now it is with pain, and with fear and trembling, that he can endure the smallest disappointment, or the slightest inconvenience. See the last struggle of the

leaf. Its beauty is faded and gone. Its color and decline wear the resemblance of mortality. The stalk, which formed its union with the branch, has become like a slender thread. The gentle breeze advances as the breath of death, it trembles, it falls to rise no more. Such, and so solemn is the final end of man.

V. The anatomy of the leaf is a subject of instructive information to an inquisitive mind. A leaf, when passing through a certain easy process by the artist's hand, is soon deprived of its pulp or fleshy parts, while the fibres remain like a beautiful piece of lace-work. Let us not pass over this operation on the leaf, without a thought on the last stage of a breathless human body. It is laid in the grave; the worms perform the operation of dissection; the flesh, the skin, with all its internal contents, are gradually removed, and nothing remains but the bones, the skeleton of man! If the infidel Galen, notwithstanding his rejection of a Supreme Being, on beholding the skeleton of a man in the woods, could exclaim, "Behold a God! adore him, and obey," and by this circumstance be converted to the knowledge and obedience of the Almighty, shall we not seriously improve the many moral and religious instructions which both nature and the Scriptures afford? Let the falling leaf teach thee, O man! the solemn lesson of thy frail existence, and how soon thou mayest crumble into dust. Yet stop not here. Sin made man mortal, and by sin came death. When thy



body, as a leaf, shall fall, oh! whither shall thy soul wing its way? First fly to a Saviour's arms, and all the bliss of heaven is yours. Behold "him as the Tree of Life, in the midst of the Paradise of God, which bears twelve manner of fruits every month," to show their variety, richness, and abundance; "and the leaves of the tree," so far from fading, "are for the healing of the nations."

I shall finish this paper by introducing a subject which forms a perfect contrast to the fall of the leaf. It is by assuring you, from the sacred Scriptures, that God, in the garden of his grace, has his evergreens, which shall never, never fade. Of these David has drawn an admirable description in his first Psalm. It is that of the "godly whose delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, who bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." The prophet Jeremiah, as though he had dipped his pen in the same ink, has graphically described the same character, with its attendant prosperity. Chap. xvii. 7, 8. "Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit." Thus, though the bodies of the godly, like the bodies of other men, must neces-

sarily "fade as the leaf," and fall to the dust, yet the state and character of their souls, and the virtues of their lives, are such, that so far from fading as a leaf, and finally perishing, they have the faithful promise and the rich influence of Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, upon them, that "they shall have their fruit unto holiness, and in the end everlasting life." Blessed, therefore, indeed, is that man whose only hope is founded in his God and Saviour. Planted by the river of the water of life, he shall bear celestial fruit; and although he drop his mortal leaves in the dust, his fruitful soul shall be transported, to bloom for ever in the Paradise above! Let godly and aged Christians comfort one another in the possession of such hopes, and in prospects so divine.

There is one other reflection upon this subject, which is so interesting to the pious heart, that I cannot possibly omit its recital. The leaf, separated from its twig, can never again be re-united by the art of man, but must moulder in the dust, and be cast into irretrievable oblivion. Not so man. Though his body fails and falls as a leaf, becomes a skeleton in the grave, and finally every atom of his frame returns to dust, so that not one particle can be discerned from its mother earth; still God can raise the dead, and the dead in Christ shall rise first. The sins of the wicked, the violations of the order of Providence, the justice and judgment of God, these demand a resurrection of the dead. The glory of God's grace in the redemption and salvation of his people by the death

and resurrection of Christ unto eternal felicity, also requires it, that the bodies of the saints, which like fallen leaves are buried in the dust, should be raised, re-united to the souls that claim them, and both receive an eternal verdure in the climes of bliss. What, therefore, is impossible with man, whether to re-unite a leaf to its stalk, or raise the dead, is possible with God. "Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." Dan. xii. 2. Let me, therefore, earnestly entreat the aged reader to look to Christ exalted, for a confirmed lively hope of a triumphant resurrection, as the only solace under the infirmities of declining age, as his leaf trembles in expectation of its fall. May your faith be as firm as Job's, and with him in humility say, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me."



# IMPROPER DISPOSITIONS

FREQUENTLY ATTRIBUTED TO THE AGED, CONTRASTED  
WITH THEIR OPPOSITE VIRTUES.

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The passions are a restless crowd,  
Imperious, positive, and loud.  
Curb these licentious sons of strife ;  
Hence chiefly rise the storms of life ;  
If they grow mutinous and rave,  
They are thy masters, thou their slave.

ANON.

WHEN we consider the course of events during a long life, the many admonitions which must from to time have been received, and the experience which should have been derived therefrom, it is deeply to be lamented that aged persons, of either sex, should indulge in improprieties, whether of temper or of conduct; for of this we are certain, that "old age is honorable, if it be found in the way of righteousness." It is, however, a false conclusion, that old age, of itself, generates improper dispositions. They certainly are the baneful effects of either bad instruction or evil habits, encouraged in more early life, and now

become more rooted and confirmed, while there is little strength remaining to counteract their injurious influence. What a strong argument does this afford of the imperious necessity of cultivating and cherishing amiable qualities in early life; and especially of possessing the sanctifying grace of God, that instead of old age resembling a field of briars and thorns, it may exhibit something like a well-cultivated garden, whose flowers and fruits are delightful to every beholder! All pious aged Christians will tell you, that notwithstanding their many years' experience of the grace of God, and the abundant means of instruction which they have enjoyed, still they find the latent evils of their heart to be their greatest burden, which would frequently overwhelm them, were it not for constant supplies of the same grace to enable them to walk worthy of the Lord, and bear some good fruit to the honor of his name, and the benefit of all around them. To illustrate this subject I shall name a few of those evil dispositions and habits which have not unfrequently been imputed to the aged, and show their greater deformity, by stating their opposite virtues, and thus endeavor to produce a beneficial effect upon the reader's mind.

**COVETOUSNESS.**—I name this first, because the Scripture says “the love of money is the root of all evil,” for it generally produces other sad tempers and dispositions, and seldom fails to bring greater evils at last. 1 Tim. vi. 10. It is likewise declared to be

“idolatry.” Col. iii. 5 ; Eph. v. 5. For setting the affections inordinately upon worldly treasure of any kind, is like making “the golden calf in the wilderness,” as a substitute for the Almighty, and never fails to draw the heart from him who ought to be the supreme object of adoration, and the only fountain of true felicity. For these reasons, God in his law declares, “thou shalt not covet.” Ex. xx. 17. And Christ in the Gospel warned his disciples to “beware of covetousness.” Luke xii. 15. Covetousness is a selfish, carnal disposition, to increase a man’s property or interest, by obtaining the wages of others, whether by lawful or improper means ; and in this case, whatever the eye sees the heart covets, though it be sometimes at the expense of truth, justice, or good propriety. Besides, when a person is in possession of an ample sufficiency, and yet “withholdeth more than is meet,” and is unwilling to part with a portion to feed the hungry, instruct the ignorant, or relieve the distressed, we cannot but pronounce such an one covetous. Like all other evil dispositions in our fallen nature, this propensity is not confined to the rich, but is often very strongly marked in the temper and conduct of almost all other classes that may be named. Now, if any class of persons should be free from this evil temper, we would naturally suppose it to be the aged, for being about to leave this world of vanity, pain, and suffering, they should not desire more than is necessary to convey them to their journey’s end. But alas ! the fact is very reverse ; and that even at

the age of seventy or more, they are more eager after the accumulation of this world's goods, than they were at the age of twenty-five, when they first commenced the career of busy life! Certainly we may ask, if a person so deeply stricken in years still possesses so strong an anxiety for worldly possessions, how can he be supposed to indulge serious thoughts of his expected dying hour; his accountability at the judgment-seat of his God; his need of a Saviour to pardon his transgressions, and to prepare him for a future state of happiness? Can these most solemn subjects be supposed to comport with a spirit of covetousness for worldly gratification? Prudence and economy, with the enjoyment of the necessities and comforts of life are desirable, especially under the infirmities of age; but the heart still set upon the world, and the desires corroded by covetousness, give us reason to believe that the individual is no more prepared to go out of the world than he was the day he came into it. But we may go further, and inquire whether it be possible for an aged person, who professes to love the Saviour in sincerity, and regularly attends the worship of God, to indulge this wordly spirit of covetousness? We need only reply, that as there were some professors of Christianity in the days of the Apostle John, "who had this world's good, saw their brother in need, and shut up their bowels of compassion against him," so it is too frequently observed in the present day, though it creates a suspicion that "the love of God does not dwell in them." 1 John iii. 17. A person may indeed



profess with his lips, that he has a warm heart for religion, while both hand and heart are cold and stiff to the calls of charity, and the necessary appeals for means to spread the knowledge of the Gospel of Christ in the world. In both these instances we may correctly say, that covetousness is the root of all evil, for it binds up the softer passions of the heart, darkens the mind, prevents its moral improvement, and withdraws it from the necessary considerations of eternity, while, at the same time, it creates a suspicion, that such persons, old as they may be, have not yet learned the example of Jesus, to "love your neighbor as yourself," nor "how to use the world as not abusing it."

Let the reader cast his eye upon the opposite character, that of a contented, aged person, whether male or female, and it will be found worthy of his imitation. Though much may be said on the difference of external circumstances, the texture of the natural dispositions of men, and the application of philosophical maxims to curb a covetous, avaricious disposition, it is the influence of the grace of God, and the principles of the Gospel of Christ, conveyed to the soul by the Spirit of the Lord, which are the only efficacious means to form a contented man. Paul said, "By the grace of God, I am what I am." 1 Cor. xv. 10. "I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content." Phil. iv. 11. And he knew that "godliness with contentment is great gain." 1 Tim. vi. 6. A person possessed of this grace, let scarcity or plenty attend him, has a satisfaction within

himself, which gives a stab to covetous worldly desires, and at the same time produces contentment. Sensible that by his sins and multiplied transgressions, he has forfeited all claims upon the Divine bounty, and enjoying a sense of his redemption by Christ, and his reconciliation to God as his everlasting Father, he believes that all his mercies and comforts, as well as his privations and afflictions, are weighed and measured to him by infinite wisdom, and designed to produce his greatest good. He knows too, that God, who "has fed him all his life long," can still supply his wants, for he hath said, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee;" and with such considerations as these, he wraps himself up as in the mantle of contentment, praising the Lord for his goodness, and by the liberality and kindness which his means will permit him to show, he strives to make all around him contented and happy. Blessed indeed, must be such an old man! and what a blessing must he prove to the family with whom he dwells. But this is not all. While he cheerfully submits to his lot upon earth, he directs the eye of his faith through the valley of death, to the mansions prepared to receive his soul in everlasting felicity. Instead, therefore, of indulging a covetous disposition after more of this world's goods, he is looking earnestly for his happiness to come. And if you were near enough to hear him, he would say, "Let the bonds of the world, and the cords of my life, loosen together; so that when the hour of my death shall arrive, I may have nothing to withhold me from ascending to my Saviour and to my heavenly home."

Go, reader, to the feet of Jesus, seek his mercy, learn of him, and you will find the jewel of contentment, and the path which leads to a fulness of joy and pleasures for evermore.

O that the Lord would guide my ways  
To keep his statutes still !  
O that my God would grant me grace  
To know and do his will !

From vanity turn off my eyes ;  
Let no corrupt design,  
Nor covetous desires, arise  
Within this soul of mine.

WATTS.

**JEALOUSY.**—This injurious disposition grows out of the evil of covetousness, and is its legitimate offspring, generally receiving its own baneful reward. In all relations of life it produces very unhappy effects, but when indulged in by persons in advanced years, it seldom fails to be injurious to themselves, and extremely mortifying and afflictive to those around them. Some say, “jealousy is common to old people,” but for their sakes I hope the assertion is not true. For it is a pity that a man whose eye is growing dim with age, should be justly accused with having the jaundiced eye of jealousy ! However, some may be more jealous, suspicious, or distrustful than others. In this case it would be well for such person, when he or she finds this feeling to arise in the breast, either to make a strong effort to stifle the impression, or silently await till they are certain of the fact, that their injury is intended. Not

unfrequently jealousy arises from imaginary causes; and it is well known that the mind of the aged grows feeble, and the imagination is apt to be flighty, so that such a person may be incautiously mistaken. But where a person is in the habit of indulging evil surmise or jealousy, he can show it by sullen silence, by words, or by actions, which are easy to be perceived by those around him. We know too, that the infirmities of age make a man more or less dependent upon others; and to receive their kind attentions is certainly one of the comforts necessary in this stage of debilitated humanity. Few infirm men or women have too many friends, especially if their circumstances are needy, which consideration demands of them all that frankness and grateful feeling which will insure their continuance. But where a mixture of covetousness and suspicion are visible, they cannot but produce neglect; especially where an aged person is attended by children, relatives, friends, or servants, assiduous to confer their kindness, while the object of their attention manifests a suspicion of their faithfulness, whether in their charge of his property, the management of his concerns, or an attachment to his person. This is ungenerous in itself, more cruel than the grave, and seldom procures any thing but disappointment. Yet how many by such conduct have worn out the patience of their friends, proved the truth of Scripture testimony, "unthankful, unholy;" and the only remaining secret wish of their friends has been, to see such an unhappy spirited old person safe lodged in his grave! The consideration of this case

should teach us to pity those who indulge such unhappy tempers, so injurious to themselves, and to wish them such amiable and grateful dispositions as are calculated to promote their personal tranquillity, and the pleasures of domestic life.

Not so the man who knows and loves the Lord his God, and governs his temper and conduct by the Gospel of the meek and lowly Jesus. He that trusts his God most, will certainly make the best use of his friends; and instead of harboring the sin of jealousy, he will cultivate its opposite virtue, by placing confidence in all, unless criminal actions compel him to abandon them. The experience of his life, and the knowledge of his own heart, forbid him to be rash in judging the dispositions and the conduct of others. He daily finds that he has more need of being jealous of himself than of others, for he knows that "the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked;" and should any deceive him in the management of his temporal concerns, it would be but a momentary disappointment when compared with the possibility of his deceiving himself in his hope for eternity. He therefore puts the best construction upon the conduct of those around him. If any prove unfaithful to his person, or to his temporal interest, it brings to his recollection the many instances of his own unfaithfulness to his God and Saviour, for which he heaves the sigh, and drops the tear of sorrow! Amiable in his temper, devout in his soul to his heavenly Father, and grateful for the kind offices of his friends, he closely resembles

David, who "walked within his house with a perfect heart." Instead of being a vexation and a burden to others, who would indulge a wish to get rid of him, they cultivate the most tender sympathy for his infirmities, watch over him with tenderness, and cherish the glimmering flame of life until it finally expires. How great is the difference between these two aged persons! The one held in disesteem, while his own bosom is tormented with suspicion, and he proves a burden to himself; the other, like a placid stream, cool and gently gliding within its banks, till it unites with the vast ocean of eternity. May this be the true picture of the aged reader, and then he will not fail to say,

"Lord guide me down the stream of age,  
And keep my passions cool;  
Teach me to know the sacred page,  
And practice every rule."

**INTEMPERANCE.**—The frequent use of intoxicating liquor, whether by male or female, is productive of the most ruinous consequences to the health of the body, the powers of the mind, the reputation of character, and above all, leads to the loss of soul; for we are assured, that "no drunkards shall inherit the kingdom of God;" and certainly they are classed among the most reprobate of characters. 1 Cor. vi. 10. Intoxication seldom fails to expose a man to temptations and snares from the crafty, leads to the cultivation and practice of those vices at which he would shudder were he sober; and by such ways he so corrupts all the

faculties of the soul, that if it were possible for him while in that state to enter into the kingdom of God, it would be no heaven to him. Indeed it is evident, that the indulgence of this practice is not only an abuse of the bounty of God, but it actually lowers a man beneath the brute creation ; for you never saw a bird or a beast that would drink more at a time than satisfied their natural thirst, whatever enticements were used. Perhaps the instances are not very many, where persons have lived a life of sobriety, and then suddenly fell into the habit of drinking to excess when they grew old ; and yet it is not unusual for such aged persons to have apologies at hand for their conduct. One attributes it to the disappointments and losses he has met with. Another says it helps to keep up his feeble constitution, and makes him cheerful. Another lays it to the enticement of company. Another confesses that he has followed the habit so long that he has not resolution to leave it off, and imagines were he to do so, his animal frame would speedily sink. Let the reader weigh these apologies in the scale of reason. Why should an aged person who has met with misfortunes, seek to drown them in strong liquor, instead of applying in humble prayer for relief to the God of all consolation ? Ought not a man to know, and if he does not, let him ask a physician, whether the means he uses to preserve his constitution will not inevitably destroy it, especially when he is told in the Scriptures, that “strong drink shall be bitter to them that drink it.” Isa. xxiv. 9. Why should the influence of such

company prevail, who are themselves devoted to intemperance, when by following their example he will the more speedily be numbered with the congregation of the dead? If it be a habit of long continuance, then there are a thousand considerations which should convince him of the absolute necessity of its being abandoned; and however it has obtained the mastery over him, so that by every effort he cannot overcome it, still we know that "the things which are impossible with men, are possible with God." Luke xviii. 27. Perhaps there never was a vice indulged in the world, without the person being prompted to make some apology for its practice, or at any rate, to give it a more plausible appearance. It was so in the transgression of our first parent Adam, and the like disposition is more or less apparent in his fallen posterity. I have an old man of whom I have been speaking offers another apology in his favor, which he thinks more justifiable of his conduct; he says, "I make no profession of religion, therefore I cannot injure it, but I know a person older than myself, who has been many years a member of a church, and regular in his attendance on a Sunday with his family, that seldom fails to speak against drunkenness, and yet I have often seen him at home take more glasses than one at a sitting, and put himself into as merry a mood as the company you blame me for visiting." If what this old man says be true, it certainly is a stumbling-block in the way of abandoning his own practice, and teaches us the vast importance of possessing those sound godly



principles of religion, that will produce a virtuous and godly practice. A person who professes the name of Christ, and yet is secretly fond of strong drink, lays his character open to great suspicion; and although he may escape the eye and the censure of the church with which he is connected, yet the eye of his God is upon him, and the reproaches of his own conscience must be severe. Who can warrant that his habit in private may not become so confirmed, that by the force of temptation he may be led into the open paths of intemperance, and that in the issue his long life will end beneath the black cloud of disgrace!

The man of sober habits, on the contrary, is entitled to commendation. His mind being undisturbed by the intoxicating draught, he pursues his occupation with fidelity, and is less exposed to the snares of human life. In old age his intellects, however they may fail, are yet collected and serene. He experiences high satisfaction in spending his days as a sober citizen. So far is valuable. But if we look at that good old man to whom, whether in his early or his latter days, "the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared, teaching him, that denying ungodliness and worldly lust, he should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present world," you will find this person acting from the purest principles in the various departments of his life, be he rich or poor. He knows that as an intemperate old man is the scorn of society, so a professor of religion, indulging in intemperance, is the greatest scandal to the name of his Saviour! For

these reasons, as well as from his spiritual inclination, he sets a perpetual guard over his natural appetites; and the exhortation that the Scripture gives, that "the aged man be sober, grave, temperate, sound in the faith, in charity, and in patience," to him is exceedingly salutary, as it is his meat and drink to do the will of his God. Therefore nature with him may be said to take its own course in the breaking up of his frail tabernacle, and the vice of intemperance has not lent its cruel aid to bring him a day sooner to his latter end.

Blest is the man who shuns the place  
Where sinners love to meet :  
Who fears to tread their wicked ways,  
And hates the drunkard's seat.

Green as the leaf, and ever fair  
Shall his profession shine ;  
While fruits of holiness appear,  
Like clusters on the vine.

**ANGER.**—A small acquaintance with mankind will teach us, that their natural dispositions are nearly as various as their persons; and we are likewise obliged to confess, that in our fallen state, all the passions of the soul are more or less vitiated by sin, else we never should have heard of an angry man. No wonder then that Solomon says, "Anger resteth in the bosom of fools." Ec. vii. 9. We may certainly say, that when the fire of anger burns, all the softer passions are buried beneath its ashes, and the whole frame appears in ruins. It is generally excited by a person having

received a real or supposed injury, and sometimes without any cause, which makes the disposition still more criminal. This temper will discover itself even in infancy. But why some should apply this disposition to the aged more particularly is worth our consideration. It must be granted, that persons of a choleric disposition, who have indulged a warm temper in more active days, are more likely to be accompanied by it in their old age, when the feebleness of their mental and animal faculties is incapable of resisting it. Besides, while we dare not encourage their criminal tempers, we should bear in remembrance that they now endure pains and infirmities unknown to them before, which are calculated to make them peevish and fretful, and which demand kind admonition, sympathy, and condolence. But there may be others of a settled, choleric temper, so long encouraged, that it breaks out on the most trifling occasion, setting themselves and those who surround them, as in a blaze! Few people that indulge this habit, but must know it. Should the reader unhappily be of this number, it is indispensably necessary that he be warned of its consequences. Every physician will tell you that anger quickly throws the whole nervous and muscular system into unnatural motion; it operates violently upon the heart and all its contiguous vessels; while the blood, heated by the fire of passion, scorches the whole animal machine, and throws it into agitation. Of the truth of this statement any man may be sensible by his own feelings, when the fit of his passion is subsiding. If these

effects be so sensible to a man in the strength of his days, how much more severe must they be to an old man or woman, whose resolution and bodily strength are reduced to almost helpless infancy? So true is it therefore said by Solomon, "He that is soon angry dealeth foolishly. A wrathful man that stirreth up strife, and a furious man aboundeth with transgression." Prov. xiv. 17; xxix. 22. What then must be the end of an angry man? While this unhappy angry disposition is so injurious to a man's own person, it certainly must produce a corresponding effect upon those with whom he is connected? It is said, "make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man thou shalt not go." Prov. xxii. 24. What encouragement is there for a relation or a friend to administer to the comfort and support of an aged person who indulges a temper like this? Can a man take burning coals into his bosom, and be not scorched? Let an aged person reflect on the consequences of this temper to himself, and we cannot but imagine that he would see his own interest to resist the impulses and set a double guard over the violence of his passion. But what are the effects of anger when merely committed against our fellow creatures, when compared with it as an evil in the sight of God? Every man that reads his Bible knows that "anger and wrath" are classed among "the works of the flesh," which exclude from the kingdom of heaven, where harmony and love eternally dwell. Gal. v. 19-21. The man who indulges this spirit, must also know that thereby he

nourishes those sentiments of ill will and vindictive displeasure that cannot but be abhorred by a holy, just, and good God, and call down his anger in return. Of this I personally knew an instance in an old man, who, by indulging his passion against his tenant, fell down and expired in a fit of apoplexy! After all, let sober reason judge whether it be not desirable for every aged man or woman, who thinks at all of death, rather to bear injuries, to make the best of their friends, and to leave them, when called, in gratitude and peace? As a confirmation of this truth, let me introduce in this place the opposite character to a fretful angry person.

A person who possesses meekness, kindness, and forgiveness, certainly forms a direct contrast to one who is given to anger. With all the allowance we may give to the flowing of a man's naturally bad temper, and his indulgence of it for many years, when God renews his heart, it will produce a visible difference. Saul of Tarsus, who may be called the raging lion, was transformed into the gentleness of the lamb. If a man profess himself to be a disciple of Christ, in his school he certainly must have learned of him to be "meek and lowly in heart," and thereby, among other blessed results, he has found "rest" and tranquillity from the angry passions of his soul. When a man of violent temper has received the mercy of the Lord in his conversion, it has frequently been said, "that grace was grafted upon a crab-stock." The emblem is true, for all above the graft will bring forth the amiable fruits of grace (Gal. iii. 22-25), while the stock

beneath still remains wild, and every sprout that proceeds from it must be mortified or separated. (Gal. v. 19-21.) If you converse with such a person, he will tell you, that however difficult or painful to accomplish, he finds it his duty when any of his old, peevish, crabbed tempers arise, to seek the aid of the Lord, to give him strength to lop them off; and thus it may be said of him, "he is not soon angry," and obtains a becoming victory over himself. He does not allow himself to be angry with anything but *sin*, and in this he endeavors to make the necessary distinction between the *person* offending and the *offence*; the one claiming his pity, and the other his displeasure; and thus he does not allow "the sun to go down upon his wrath." What a valuable person must this be in a family or in society! His amiable virtues are respected, the kindness of his friends is more abundant, while the composure of his own mind, like a gentle stream, glides along, refreshing all in its course, and giving a lustre to his religious profession, and honor to the name of his Saviour!

The spirit like a peaceful dove,  
Flies from the haunts of noise and strife;  
Why should we vex and grieve his love,  
Who forms our souls for heav'nly life?  
Tender and kind be all our thoughts;  
Through all our lives let kindness run;  
So God forgives our num'rous faults,  
For the blest sake of Christ his Son.

In concluding this paper, let it be remembered that

the evils which have been represented form no personal charge against the reader. It is his duty to examine himself, as accountable to his Maker, for his bending age admonishes him to prepare to meet his God. Other pernicious tempers have sometimes been attributed to certain old people ; but whether true or false, from those facts which have been stated, almost every other proceed. It will easily be observed that COVETOUSNESS is *the root of all evil* ; from thence springs JEALOUSY ; no wonder that INTEMPERANCE follows ; and then ANGER completes the character of unhappy and miserable old age. If of any these, or of the whole of them, in any degree, the reader's conscience brings in a verdict of guilty, it is devoutly to be wished that the Lord of grace and love may grant him a just and penitential sense of their evil, follow it with his pardon by the blood of his Son, and so transform his heart, temper, and life, that he may yet come to his grave in peace ! Besides, whether the reader may condemn himself or not, he cannot but approve, if not admire, the character and disposition of that pious old man who is CONTENTED with his lot in life, as best designed for his good by the will of his heavenly Father. In his connexion and intercourse with others, he is candid and generous, avoiding all suspicion and JEALOUSY, thereby saving himself pain and anxiety ; living his last days in SOBRIETY, he preserves his health, and retains his intellects in a good degree of composure and penetration ; and while curbing every disposition to anger, he is MODERATE, mild, affa-

ble, and kind, receiving the attention and veneration of those around him. Now let the reader form his own opinion on the difference between these two characters, and determine his choice. May the God of his life so enrich him with the transforming efficacy of his grace, that he may close the days of his earthly pilgrimage in the character of an amiable, happy old Christian.

WHENE'ER the angry passions rise,  
And tempt our thoughts or tongues to strife,  
To Jesus let us lift our eyes,  
Bright pattern of the Christian life.

O how benevolent and kind !  
How mild, how ready to forgive !  
Be this the temper of our mind,  
And these the rules by which we live.

To do his heavenly Father's will  
Was his employment and delight ;  
Humility and holy zeal  
Shone through his life divinely bright.

Dispensing good where'er he came,  
The labors of his life were love ;  
Then, if we bear the Saviour's name,  
By his example let us move.

But, ah ! how blind, how weak we are !  
How frail, how apt to turn aside !  
Lord, we depend upon thy care ;  
We ask thy Spirit for our guide.



# A D I S C O U R S E

ON ZECHARIAH VIII. 4, 5.

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Thus saith the Lord of hosts, There shall yet old men and old women dwell in the streets of Jerusalem, and every man with his staff in his hand for very age. And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof.

**THE** whole of this chapter contains what I may call a prophetic promise to the captive Jews in Babylon, that they should return to their own land, rebuild the desolated walls of their city, and repair their temple, that the Lord God might dwell among them. To confirm their faith in the certainty of this great event, the words, **THE LORD OF HOSTS** are written no less than fifteen times in this chapter ; a circumstance which does not occur in any other chapter in the Bible. When God should fulfil this promise, the city would exhibit a scene totally different to that in the time of its desolation, produced by their enemies ; for then “there was no hire for man, nor any hire for beast ; neither was there any peace to him that went out or came in because of the affliction : for I set all men every one

against his neighbor. But now I will not be unto the residue of this people as in the former days, saith the Lord of hosts." One instance of this peaceable and happy change of state, is announced in the text, "There shall yet," &c. &c. The fourth verse assures them of their LONGEVITY, that they shall live to a great age, and the fifth for an abundant increase of their POPULATION, by having so many children unmolested, playing in their streets; which is equally expressive of their safety, health, and happiness. From this remarkable passage I shall offer a few considerations, in the earnest hope of their affording a few lessons of instruction.

I. Preservation in life to good old age, whether to man or woman, is a blessing from the Lord of hosts, which ought to be devoutly acknowledged and gratefully improved. At fifty or sixty, men are called aged, but they do not arrive to old age until they reach the number seventy. (Psalm xc. 10.) The reasons why this advanced stage of life should be devoutly improved are:—life is naturally desirable and precious, whatever may be our situation in the world, whether rich or poor. Indeed it is ingendered in our very nature; "all that a man hath will he give for his life;" and there is nothing he dreads so much as meeting with death, "the king of terrors." You who are aged have been indulged with this blessing, and therefore are under the highest obligation to improve it to the best advantage. Persons of such great age must be sup-

posed to have seen very many changes in themselves, in their families, and in the providence of God; and in proportion to a man's station and connexions in the world, whether elevated or obscure, he is able to record a variety of events which fill him with astonishment, and compel him to acknowledge the hand of God in them all! We can have no doubt but that such very aged people in the long journey through life, must have had many lessons of a religious kind, calculated to give them instructions, and awaken their attention to a necessary preparation for the world to come. Few there are but have had their instructors and ministers, and scarce any but what have possessed a Bible, and it will become each one to ask himself, "What improvement have I made of all those privileges which I have for so many years enjoyed? Am I wise unto salvation? Have I more knowledge of my God and of a Saviour? Am I more prepared to go the way from whence I shall not return?" These are necessary and important questions. For it is to be feared there are very many aged persons who have either neglected or misimproved their numerous privileges, and are no more prepared to go out of the world than when they came into it. Ask if this be your own case? Aged persons, whether men or women, who have experienced the abundant grace of our Lord Jesus in more early life, must have received a multitude of mercies and favors to lay them under everlasting obligation and and praise! Perhaps the reader has often seen "the Lord's going forth in his

sanctuary. Psam lxviii. 24. You have been witness to the conversion of many sinners by the sovereign grace of God. You have seen likewise some professors of religion turn aside from the good ways of the Lord, which pierced your heart with sorrow. You have had, in the course of your long life, numberless opportunities to do good to your fellow creatures, whether by your hand, your counsel, or your example ; and of course you have had great length of days to bear fruit, and honor your God and Saviour for his name sake, and for the multiplied blessings which he has bestowed upon you ; and it must be added, that you have witnessed many of the saints of God going home to heaven before you. When you take all these into consideration, and add them together, must you not confess that your days have been made a blessing by the hand of the Lord, and that such favors demand your warmest gratitude, and excite your devout improvement, the few days you may yet have to live ? None but the thoughtless would treat these sentiments with indifference !

II. When persons in great age enjoy any degree of health and activity, it is a cause of still more abundant thankfulness. Those old men and women mentioned in the text, were not confined to their chambers by the infirmities frequently incident to decaying nature, neither were they laid upon their beds by chronic diseases, or by palsy, which many old people have long endured before their death.

But these men and women, notwithstanding their advanced age, had strength sufficient "to walk in the streets of Jerusalem." By this little exercise they enjoyed the salubrity of fresh air; their cool blood was warmed by circulation; their dormant senses were enlivened; the variety of scenes in the street were engaging; and the ties of friendship prompted them perhaps to visit a neighbor. Still more so with the little strength which remained; like Zechariah, Elizabeth, and good old Anna the prophetess, they could go and visit the house of the Lord. Should the reader, notwithstanding the infirmities naturally attending his age, be so favored as to enjoy such a share of health and activity as the persons here mentioned, he cannot be too grateful; and I hope he will employ his time to the most pious purposes, and to the best advantage to all around him.

III. Such are the natural infirmities which generally accompany the latter stage of human life. No wonder we should find it recorded in the text, that the old men who dwelt in the streets of Jerusalem had "every man his staff in his hand for very age." Solomon, in his admirable description of old age, in the twelfth chapter of Ecclesiastes, says, "The keepers of the house tremble, and the strong men bow themselves." The muscular fibres become relaxed, which produces debility, and causes the trembling of the system, and this renders a staff in the hand desirable and necessary for the purpose of walking. The

patriarch Jacob had his favorite staff, with which he twice passed over Jordan, and on which, in his dying chamber, he leaned and worshipped ; and it is possible you may have a favorite staff with which you may have taken many a long journey, and which now supports your tottering steps in old age. Besides, what I may call a domestic staff, is highly desirable. I mean a cordial and firm friend, on whom you may rely for numberless comforts which your feeble state requires. You know that Zacharias said unto the angel, "I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years." Luke i. 18. No doubt, as this venerable couple were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless, they were a staff and a comfort to each other. Although it is seldom the lot of mortals that the man and his wife are permitted to live together to so great an age, still when death separates them, the survivor looks to a child or a grandchild, to be something like a staff to support and encourage the enfeebled mind. But after all, the promise of the Lord is the best staff for the aged, for he hath said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." Heb. xiii. 5. When this staff is grasped in the hand of faith, it is both safe and pleasant walking down the hill of life to the vale of death.

IV. Let us at least indulge a supposition of the peculiar gratification which these aged men and women must have derived from seeing the streets of

Jerusalem full of boys and girls engaged at their innocent diversions. I call them innocent, because they had not retired into the lanes, alleys, and dark corners, to practice wickedness and commit depredations upon the persons and property of the inhabitants, but they were employed at their pastime in the open streets, where every eye could inspect their conduct. Air and exercise are equally necessary for the growth and health of children, and they are of equal advantage to unbend the mind, and give a spring to pursue the advantages of their education. While these aged people were amused by seeing these children at their different diversions, it could not fail to bring to their recollection the scenes of their own childhood and youth. As it is generally calculated that one half of the human race die before manhood, and very few live to old age, so it could not fail to excite the warmth of their gratitude, that the Lord had preserved them to so late a period of life. Besides, it is a subject of their rejoicing, that God had not forgotten his Jerusalem, that her population was abundantly increasing, and that a new generation was rising up, who should fill the places which would soon be made vacant by their passing away to the world beyond the grave. Let the reader say whether similar scenes of rising youth do not produce corresponding feelings of pleasure and joy in his own breast. Yes! delightful to see the young progeny arise to take our places, and act their part on the stage of life, when we shall lie silent in the grave. And does it not confirm the truth

of God's promise, that "instead of thy fathers shall be thy children, whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth." Psalm xlv. 16.

V. Our concluding observation shall be on the place where these aged people resided. It was Jerusalem; the meaning of which is, the vision, or possession of peace, because there, in the fulness of time, the Messiah, the Prince of Peace, was to live, suffer, and die, making peace by the blood of his cross, and where his first spiritual church was to be established. In the preceding verse, Jerusalem is called "Zion, a city of truth; the mountain of the Lord of hosts," where the Lord promised to dwell among the people of Israel. While this was literally true of that ancient city, on the return of the captive Jews, it was an emblem of the spiritual and glorious church of Christ, the new Jerusalem, which is from above, to be an habitation for God through the Spirit, and which continues and increases to the end of the world! I will only add, that this is the best and most honorable place of residence for the aged and the young, who have tasted that the Lord is gracious, and who are looking for that celestial "city, whose builder and maker is God.



## THE ELEVENTH HOUR.

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Of some we hear, of others read,  
Who dreadful lengths in sin proceed,  
Whom hell seems ready to devour,  
Yet called at—*the eleventh hour*.  
What anthems such will sing above,  
To sov'reign, free, electing love !  
And own 'twas matchless grace and pow'r  
Sav'd them at—*the eleventh hour*.

MEDLEY.

ALL who read the New Testament will perceive that our Lord Jesus frequently taught his hearers by parables. This mode of instruction was admirably adapted to engage the attention, while the several parts of the picture of which it was composed elucidated the important instruction it was intended to convey. By this method it was immaterial whether the story of the parable were real or apparent, the design of the instruction was the same. For instance, in the parable of the prodigal son, whether there were then known such a certain man that had two sons, and that the younger of them acted the part of a prodigal, could have been a matter of very little consequence, as such an unfortunate occurrence as this too frequently hap-

pens in family connexions. The design of our Lord in that parable was to vindicate his own conduct in associating with sinners; and by this, and the two other parables recorded in the same fifteenth chapter of Luke, to illustrate the important fact, that he came into the world not only to save sinners, but to receive them as prodigals to the arms of his compassion. The parable of the householder going out at different parts of the day to hire laborers for his vineyard, recorded in the twentieth chapter of Matthew, and now selected for our meditation, is of the same kind; and whether the case literally took place or not, we must believe that it is admirably calculated to convey the most important lessons of instruction on the different stages of life, and particularly so to those who may have stood idle in the great concern of their salvation, until the eleventh hour, just as the day of life is closing, and the night of death begins to produce its darkness. Under this impression we will indulge a few reflections upon this portion of Scripture, in the hope that the gracious Householder, the Lord Jesus, may grant us his sacred visitation.

It cannot be doubted but that God, since the expulsion of Adam from Paradise, has had a vineyard of grace growing and progressively increasing in the world. And to a person whose mind is interested in searching the Scriptures, this parable will be found admirably calculated to assist him in his inquiries concerning the different periods when the Lord engaged his servants, whether under the Old or the

New Testament dispensation, to carry on the work of his grace upon earth, which will be as certain in the issue as the setting of the sun completes the close of day. But the following observations upon this parable will be very plain and simple, intended to show the different stages of life when the Lord, the Householder, is pleased to engage laborers for his vineyard; and more particularly the expression of his goodness in hiring some at the eleventh hour, in the decline of life, and under the infirmities of age, when no one else would think of engaging their services.

I. No one would be disposed to call in question the right of the householder to hire his own laborers, according to his own time and pleasure, whether they be young or more advanced in age. This too is the sovereign prerogative of Jesus, the Son of God. The vineyard of the church is his own, dearly purchased with his most precious blood. The seed of his word, the means for cultivation, the plants, flowers, fruit, or whatever else the vineyard may contain, these are all of his own production. And we certainly must admit, that he knows the persons who will best suit his purpose as laborers, and that he is just to give every man his due according to his hire.\*

\* *A penny a day.* This was a Roman coin, equal to seven-pence half-penny sterling. At this time it was the usual hire of a laborer for a day's work, and deemed sufficient for his support. The moral use I shall make of it in my considerations upon this parable is simply this :—Those whom the Lord engages to work in the vineyard of his

II. The different times of the day when the householder went out to hire servants for his vineyard, is admirably designed to instruct us in the various periods of life at which it is the pleasure of the Lord to call his people from a state of idleness and sin to enter into his service. The day in the parable, according to the custom both of the Jews and the Romans at that time, was divided into twelve hours, that is, from sunrise to sunset. The householder, therefore, going out *early in the morning*, reminds us of this interesting truth, that the Lord Jesus engages some early in the morning of their youth to serve and honor their God; and although they may bear the heat and burden of the day, their service yields its thousand sacred sweets; and when they arrive at the eleventh hour, so far from regretting that they had labored so long in the vineyard of the Gospel, and served the Lord Christ, they will honor his name, and close the evening of life with joy. Happy is the youth whose heart and hand are so early engaged with the Saviour, and doubly blest is that faithful Christian who, in the shadows of the evening, still remembers the blessings of his youth, and the love of his espousals to his honored Lord! The *third hour* of the day is a time of activity in manhood, just setting

grace, shall certainly receive from his hand adequate supplies to strengthen and refresh them for the day only: for we know not of to-morrow; and at best we are only day laborers in the service of our Lord, and therefore he hath taught us to pray, *Give us this day our daily bread.*

out in life, the sun of prosperity beginning to shine in its strength, while the market-place of worldly interest allows him to calculate upon a long life of worldly enjoyments, but still is altogether idle in the concerns of his soul, and without a thought of God, of death, or of a world to come. Yet to how many such does the Saviour frequently direct his powerful voice, and engages them in his service! The change produced is so great, that their worldly pursuits are moderated, the care of the soul becomes the one thing needful, and the honor of serving the Lord is more highly esteemed by them than the wealth of nations. Others continue in the market-place to the *sixth* and the *ninth hour*, fully engaged in buying and selling, amassing worldly property, without a thought of being made rich towards God. How many such idlers are to be found, and how great the mercy of the Lord in changing the disposition of any such worldly persons, and engaging them to work in his vineyard! It is still more surprising that the Lord should go forth even at the *eleventh hour*, and engage some of those aged persons who have consumed nearly the whole of the day in folly and idleness, without considering their latter end, and that one more hour would bring them to the dark night of death. In the history of man, it is evident that more are called into the service of the Lord in the morning of life, than at any other hour of the day; and that the instances are very few of those partaking of the favors of the Saviour who have spent ten hours out of the twelve in criminal idleness.

This, at any rate, is a source of the most lively gratitude to any person called by the grace of God in the latter stage of his life.

III. The manner how these idlers in the parable were engaged in the service of the householder, not only merits our attention, but will magnify the riches of the Saviour's power and grace in calling men into his vineyard. You will easily perceive that not one of those idlers, at any time of the day, first made their application to the householder to furnish them with work. They might have heard of him as a good master, that he had a large and fruitful vineyard, that he wanted servants, and "cast out none that came unto him" for employment. On the contrary, they preferred idleness; his person and service by no means suited their inclination. How true is this of thoughtless, idle sinners! Christ might say to the Jews, "Ye will not come unto me, that ye may have life." John v. 40. If the householder had not gone into the market-place, and first addressed and engaged those slothful persons, they would have stood idle until the sun had gone down upon them, and the dark shades of night had covered them. How gracious then is Jesus, the Saviour of sinners, to enter into the busy market-place of the world, to address and engage the profligate with his powerful and life-giving voice, and turn both their hearts and their feet into the ways of peace! Therefore to his immediate disciples Jesus said, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you."

If he had not called Matthew, when at the receipt of custom, he would not have arisen and followed him. Peter, James, and John, would likewise still have continued their occupation as fishermen, had not the Lord called them, and made them fishers of men. Nor would the enraged Saul of Tarsus have relinquished his design in pursuing the destruction of the disciples at Damascus, had not the Lord met with him by the way. This, in every age, is God's gracious way with idle men. For most true it is, if he did not first begin with us, such is our moral stupidity, pride and unbelief, that we should never begin with him. In this procedure, however, the Lord uses no violence to man, neither the householder to the idlers. Though sovereign in his grace, he makes the sinner willing in the day of his power, and draws him with the cords of love, and with the bands of a man. It is certainly worthy of our observation, that of all the idlers mentioned in this parable, hired at different times of the day, not one of them made an excuse. None said, "I do not approve your person; I cannot work in a vineyard; I will not accept the terms of your wages;" on the contrary, they all immediately went into his vineyard. Connected with these observations, there is something in the reply of the idlers to the householder that ought not to escape our attention. He said unto them, "Why stand ye here all the day idle?" They say unto him, "Because no man hath hired us." This, in application to sinners, is certainly true. While it is the duty of ministers, knowing the

terrors of the Lord, and the riches of his Gospel, to persuade men, yet they can only address the outward ear of their fellow creatures, and are utterly incapable of influencing the heart, or of hiring one man's soul to serve the Lord. This alone is the prerogative of the divine Householder, whatever means may be employed to accomplish the end; and every one who has entered the vineyard of grace may with correctness declare, "No man hath hired us; it was the Lord himself, or we had not come." Therefore we may conclude the sentence by saying with David, "Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causeth to approach unto thee," whether it be early in the morning of life, or at the eleventh hour of the day.

IV. The call of an aged idle sinner at the eleventh hour of the day will conclude our present reflections, and this certainly must be considered an interesting part of the subject. We are informed that the householder went out again to hire laborers about the eleventh hour, just before sunset, and there he found others standing idle. He asked them "Why stand ye here all the day idle?" no part of the day, morning or noon, having been employed. They reply, "No man hath hired us." How descriptive is this of thoughtless old age! The day is far spent; the habit of criminal idleness is confirmed; the darkness of the mind has thickened; the conscience is reduced to perfect stupidity; and standing, as in a market-place, without any desire or activity for godly and spiritual advan-



tages. Can any thing short of abject poverty and misery be the expected lot of such persons in the approaching darkness of the night of death? To human expectation it is impossible! But let the blessed Saviour advance even at the eleventh hour, and like the householder, let him address some idle aged sinner, and ask him the question, "Why stand ye here all the day idle? go work in my vineyard;" and with such an address, light, influence, and power will be conveyed to the mind and heart, and at once cause him to abandon his idleness, and though late, cheerfully to enter into the vineyard of the Lord, and commence the new and spiritual employment. Although instances of this kind are very rare, and few aged persons are called at the eleventh hour, yet there is nothing too hard for the Lord. As a charge of idleness, especially against an old man who had been regardless of his best interest all his days, must of course produce very painful impressions upon a renewed mind, we will listen and hear the sorrowful confession which such an aged person will make:—"The morning of my youth, and the noon of my manhood," says he, "are wasted and gone! My time, my talents, my strength, have been expended in pursuing after that which is not bread. For the want of good principle and power of action, nothing have I done for the honor of my good and bountiful Creator; nothing, whether in practice or example, for the moral advantage of my fellow creatures. In all my years past, nothing have I done for myself but evil;

no divine lessons have I learned, and Gospel instruction has been despised; no evil tempers subdued, no sinful habits corrected, and no consideration have I indulged, whether I had a soul to be saved or a soul to be lost; and now it is the eleventh hour of my day! I cannot bring back one hour that has passed, and no preparation has been made to meet death or pass into eternity, and yet I shall speedily hear the clock strike twelve, to summon me away." What dismay, regret, and pain, must accompany reflections like these! Solomon's description of the slothful man's field, that "it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof broken down," (Proverbs xxiv. 31, 32,) will exhibit a strong picture of an idle man's heart, which, when known, will certainly cover him with shame, and produce his contrition. How unexpected to a person like this must be the voice of the heavenly Householder, "Go ye into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive." Time short, animal strength reduced, mere fragments of life remaining, unaccustomed to such kind of labor, hungry and thirsty under a sense of idleness, how welcome and how cheerful to find a Master so good and so generous, that will give such employment as will answer both his interest and his happiness! By the life communicating power of the Lord, this decrepid old man immediately obeys; his youth is renewed like the eagle's, and with cheerfulness he enters into the vineyard, to labor for his new and gracious Master.

Before we conclude, suppose we indulge our imagination by taking a walk into the vineyard, and look at this new born old man, if I may so call him, while employed at his labor. The ground on which he treads is to him altogether new, for it is all mercy. Ignorant in himself of the work he has to do, he takes up his Bible, the book of spiritual husbandry; and however to him it was once neglected or unknown, he now finds it to contain a perfect directory for every part of the labor which it is his duty to perform. The implements for the work which the Lord of the vineyard has provided and put into his hand, soon become familiar, though unknown to him before; faith, hope, love, zeal, patience, all these are necessary, and many others he finds indispensably so, according to the kind of work on his hand, and with these he labors diligently. When his aged feet tread upon a stone in the vineyard, it reminds him of his once hard and unbroken heart; and when he meets with a stump, it equally reminds him of that root of bitterness and evil which still remains in his breast, and which it is his desire to eradicate. The flowers and the fruit are charming to his eye, and sweet to his taste, but the feelings of his heart, and the expressions of his gratitude and love to his heavenly Master exceed the whole! Although his moments fly apace, and he anticipates the hammer of death speedily to strike twelve upon the bell of time, it creates in him no alarm; he serves the Lord Christ, who knows best when his work will be done, and then he shall receive

his *penny* of comfort and support at the last. As Solomon said, "The sleep of a laboring man is sweet," so this good old man finds it to be true: for when the clock strikes twelve, he gently reclines himself upon the bed of death in peace, and rejoices in hope of beholding the bright morning of the resurrection to everlasting life, when the vineyard of grace shall be exchanged for the Paradise of glory!

May the reader, and especially those who have stood all the day idle, be called into the vineyard of grace and mercy! and may such as are already introduced into this employment, "be steadfast, immoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

## C O N V E R S A T I O N

BETWEEN THE HONORABLE MR. SHARPLESS, A RICH GENTLEMAN, AND MR. GOODMAN, FORMERLY AN OPULENT MERCHANT, BUT WHO BY MISFORTUNES, IN HIS ADVANCED AGE, WAS REDUCED TO SLENDER CIRCUMSTANCES

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MR. SHARPLESS, a gentleman inheriting a large estate, took a morning's ride to a neighboring village. On the road, observing a neat cottage, it brought to his recollection that there lived an elderly person with whom he formerly enjoyed an intimacy, at the time when he was a merchant of great respectability ; but now, by adverse circumstances, had been compelled to retire to humble life. He felt the emotion of former friendship so sensibly, that he ordered his coachman to stop at the door, and sent in his servant to inquire if Mr. Goodman was at home. Informed that he was, and by indisposition confined to his chamber, he alighted from his carriage, for the purpose of expressing his sympathy to his old friend, and to enjoy a little conversation. By an old weather-

beaten black servant, he was conducted into a very plain but neat apartment, where he found his old acquaintance confined to his easy-chair, suffering with a severe fit of the gout, and attended by an only daughter. The interview was mutually gratifying; and after reciting some of the events of their early life, and the various changes which frequently happen in passing through the world, Mr. Goodman happened to repeat the words of the Saviour, that "a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." Luke xii. 16.

"That may be, Mr. Goodman," said Mr. Sharpless, "but I do not know how I could support myself under such a reverse of fortune as that which has fallen to your lot."

"Possibly so, Sir," replied Mr. Goodman, "transitions of this kind cannot but produce painful sensations, and the keenness of them arises from our false estimate of the nature of human enjoyments. True indeed, when I had an abundance of what the world affords, I considered myself easy and happy, but this arose from an incorrect estimate of its quality; and when my riches took wings and flew away, I began to inquire if there were not some source from whence I could find substantial good, that would supply the absence of earthly enjoyments, and not fail me in the extremity of death. If I am not mistaken, Sir, I have discovered that source, which more than a thousand fold compensates for all the losses which I have sustained."

Mr. Sharpless expressed his surprise, and said, "Perhaps, my good old friend, you have discovered the philosopher's stone, which, it is said, turns every thing it touches into gold. However, I am glad to find you so tranquil and contented, for it is common for aged people to be very peevish and fretful when they meet with heavy losses and disappointments. The secret you may have discovered to produce your tranquillity is such as I am unacquainted with; and for my part, I am quite of opinion with Solomon, that 'there is nothing better for a man than that he should eat and drink, and that he should make his soul enjoy good in his labor.' Ecclesiastes ii. 24. However, Mr. Goodman, I should have no objection to hear from what source you derive so much satisfaction under the double pressure of your infirmities of age and your pecuniary misfortunes, for you know that I was always of an inquisitive turn of mind."

"I confess, Sir," replied Mr. Goodman, "the very book out of which you have named the sentiment of Solomon, is my only directory to cultivate contentment. His opinion is certainly correct, for if Providence smiles upon the honest labor of a man, he ought to enjoy the fruits of it with gratitude; but how frequently does it occur, that he is not contented, and very far from being happy? The good which Solomon speaks of is merely temporal, and which, at best, can only serve a man so long as he lives, and at death he will find himself at as great a loss for some-

thing on which to rest his hope for future happiness, as though he had spent all his days in the most abject poverty. Now, Sir, the great thing for us to discover, is from whence we can derive that kind of happiness which supports us in our final hour, whether we shall have trodden the flowery path of prosperity, or the winding thorny road of adversity; I will, therefore, in my turn, select a passage from the same book, which assures us, that ‘happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God.’” Psalm cxlvi. 5.

“O yes!” said Mr. Sharpless, “I know all this; and our minister constantly preaches to us such doctrine. I can have no objection to it; but then you know, Mr. Goodman, we do not all want it at present. If we have abundance we can do very well, and I suppose we shall grow something more religious before we come to die. Still I am not a little surprised that you, who formerly appeared to have no more religion than what is common to your neighbors, and was always of a jovial spirit in the circle of your companions, should now be so sedate and submissive under the reverse of fortune. I do not say that you are wrong, or because the world has used you so roughly that you are out of humor with it, and therefore turn your attention to something which may be called its opposite; I will not go so far with you as that.”

Mr. Goodman answered with a smile, “I must confess to you, Sir, that when I first felt the blast



of adversity, it was received with no small share of repining at the hand of the Almighty, and like Jonah with his withered gourd, I thought 'I did well to be angry.' The irritation of my spirits finally sunk into despondency, and I began to feel more sensibly the infirmities and pangs of age. Under this dark cloud my heart was grateful to the Lord, that notwithstanding my losses in business were as severe as they were unexpected, yet I was still able to pay every man his due, and had a small surplus left, sufficient for a plain subsistence in this little cottage during the fragment of time I may be permitted to live. And ——"

Here Mr. Sharpless interrupted him. "My good friend, suffer me to interrupt you; no doubt the reverse of your circumstances, and the want of activity and lively company, must have sunk your spirits below par. You were always fond of innocent mirth, and that you know is always necessary to keep the chin above water; as to your good heart, nobody ever doubted it, and you have given full proof of your Christian character by the honorable adjustment of your money concerns, and by paying every man his full demands, though you left yourself but barely sufficient for an humble subsistence. Indeed I think you were a little squeamish, for although I call myself as good a Christian as any one who walks, if I had stood in your shoes I should have docked the end of their bills for my own comfort, for you know the old saying, 'love yourself best, and your friends will love

you the better.' How valuable it is for a man to have a good and honest heart! yet do you not think he may be righteous overmuch? Too much of one thing is good for nothing. I do not doubt but that your integrity will support you all your days, for after all it is said, honesty is the best religion in the world. Besides, it must be a comfort to have such an amiable daughter to attend you in your old age, and as I hope your gout will soon leave you, it will gratify me very much to receive a visit from you and your Eliza at my old mansion, where the delightful scenery will revive your spirits and recruit your health."

"I sincerely thank you, my dear Sir," said Mr. Goodman, "for your friendly invitation, and I assure you that the company of my pious daughter is the best earthly treasure the Lord has reserved to me in the evening of my life. I agree with you, Sir, that honesty is a virtue highly estimable, and that integrity and uprightness will preserve a man from self-condemnation, and most generally too from the censure of the world. My past conduct, as a merchant, does not reproach me, and the manner in which I closed my accounts affords me secret satisfaction. But after all, this is not the source of my real happiness, neither is it the main spring of my contentment."

"No!" replied the astonished Mr. Sharpless, "what then can you have besides, Mr. Goodman, or that man would wish to enjoy? You know Pope says, 'An honest man is the noblest work of God,'

and I do not know any principle more necessary, or one that can more dignify human nature. However, Mr. Goodman, you have raised my curiosity, and I wish you to proceed and tell me what superior spring of happiness you may have discovered."

"To this I can have no objection, Sir," said Mr. Goodman, "and hope I shall meet with your candor in my recital. I wish you to understand, that when I arose from the mental depression occasioned by my reverse of circumstances, I was induced to take a review of the history of my long life; for you know that if the memory of an old man fails, so that he cannot remember the occurrences of the week past, he still retains the faculty of bringing to recollection many of the scenes of his early life, as though they were of yesterday. Besides, as I was always prompt with my clerks in keeping my books, so I have been in the habit of making short notes in a private book, of the principal occurrences of my life. When I came to the last closing scene of my business, I felt grateful for my preserved life, was reconciled to my present lot, and with a degree of cheerfulness bid the busy world adieu. Now, Sir, the consideration of my having paid all my just debts to men, was immediately followed with a strong conviction of my accountability to my Maker, and which led me to inquire, whether to him I had paid my debt of obligation. This was a dictate I had never felt before; and although, as I told you, I kept a journal of my life, I had not noted down one sin or transgression in my private book.

I was now away from the world, my animal nature was decaying, and must soon die, and my accounts would be demanded by my righteous Judge. These impressive reflections led me to open my too much neglected Bible, which is God's account book against us all. I soon found I was in arrears to an immense debt of obedience, my conscience also bearing witness against my numerous sins and transgressions, which I could not but deeply deplore before the throne of my offended God. The statement which our Lord made in the seventh chapter of Luke, concerning the two debtors, 'the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty,' exactly suited my case, and I immediately marked myself as the chief debtor. Both of them, it is said, were insolvent, having 'nothing to pay,' neither had I merit to atone for a single transgression. When the creditor 'frankly forgave them both,' it gave me at least a hope that God would forgive me, though I knew not how. Eventually I was led to perceive in the same Bible, that the Son of God became a *surety* for sinners. Through his meritorious life, vicarious death, and all-atoning blood, the violated law and the provoked justice of the Almighty were satisfied; and thus Jesus was 'able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him.' This salvation I perfectly believed to be as honorable to God as it was necessary for guilty men to receive, and therefore I earnestly wished and prayed that I might enjoy its benefits. The sacred page instructed me likewise, that such enjoyments were to be obtained only by the influence

of the Holy Spirit upon the mind and heart, thereby creating that faith which leads to God, gives present peace, and terminates in the salvation of the soul. I perceived that this was the only way in which God, the creditor, *frankly*, that is, freely and fully forgives the insolvent debtor man; therefore, humbly participating in this mercy, I hope to be admitted into the mansions of blessedness for ever. This, Sir, is the new fountain opened, from which I derive my present happiness, and of which I was totally ignorant when in mercantile life. As, therefore, God in his providence dried up the streams of my earthly prosperity, and conducted me into the shades of retirement, for the purpose of opening to me the fountain of life, this demands my warmest gratitude, and produces my most cordial contentment. With David I can now say, ‘I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me; for before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word.’ I therefore ——”

At this statement, Mr. Sharpless grew so much irritated, that he warmly said, “Do let me interrupt you once more, Mr. Goodman. I have a strong opinion that you have been hearing some fanatic preachers, who have injured your nervous system, or that you greatly misunderstand your Bible. Certainly it is a good old book, but it was translated so many years ago, that its language now very little suits the present race of people, who have been so highly cultivated by the pure principles of philosophy. You

talk of Jesus Christ having fully paid your debt of sin; for my part, I think he only died to confirm his doctrines, and that he suffered enough without my putting my sins upon him, to make his groans the deeper. Besides, our rector told us last Sunday, 'that Jesus Christ came to put us under a milder law, and has made the terms so easy, that if a man be sincere in his religion, and does his duty as well as he knows how, he is sure of going to heaven;' and if this is not good doctrine, the Lord have mercy upon us all? Indeed, Sir, I think from my very heart and soul, that your new doctrines lead to Antinomianism, for if Jesus Christ has paid all your debts, you can be under no obligation, and then you may live as you please."

"In vindication of myself," replied Mr. Goodman, "and more so of the truth of God, I must say, that the Bible is sufficiently plain to me, and speaks the language of my heart, though I once did not think so, because my sins and the cares of life blinded my eyes. If Jesus Christ has not borne the punishment of our sins, my reason, as well as the Scriptures, lead me to conclude that we must bear the punishment ourselves. This places us in an awful state, for God is just as well as gracious. So far from my having imbibed the principles of those you call 'Antinomians,' I must confess I do not know any thing about them, or their sentiments. If, as you say, 'I could live as I please,' I do most sincerely assure you, Sir, that I would live a life of faith on the Son of God, and all the powers

of my soul and body should be consecrated to his holy service, honor, and glory! So far then from my being free from obligation, it is the very reverse; for oh! what infinite obligations am I under to the Lord for what he has done *for* me in the person of his Son, and for what he has done *in* me, by the teaching of his holy word and blessed Spirit, and this too at the time of my old age, and when the lamp of life is about to expire."

Mr. Sharpless now arose from his chair, and taking his hat, said, "Well, well, Mr. Goodman, all I can say is, that your new notions do not suit me, for I have still a good heart, and can work out my own salvation as well as any man, without shifting my religion. As it is time for me to go, I will repeat my invitation, that you will come and spend a day with me. Be sure to bring your daughter with you; but I beg you will leave all your religious notions at home. You and I can take a friendly dinner, smoke a pipe, and crack a bottle of old Madeira, as well as any two men in the county; so give me your hand, and I wish you good morning."

"Permit me, Sir," said Mr. Goodman, "to express my grateful feeling for your friendly visit this morning. Although we have not happily united in the chief subject of our conversation, allow me the liberty of saying, that, on due consideration, I hope you will be convinced the present fashionable religion of the day, which you so freely expressed, will not support a man under the pressure of calamity, much less will you

find it adequate to console and refresh your own spirits in the last conflict with death ; therefore sincerely wishing that the good will of him that dwelt in the bush may perpetually dwell with you, I bid you, Sir, good morning."

What sinners value I resign ;  
Lord, 'tis enough that Thou art mine ;  
I shall behold Thy blissful face,  
And stand complete in righteousness.

This life's a dream, an empty show ;  
But the bright world to which I go,  
Hath joys substantial and sincere :  
When shall I wake and find me there ?

Oh, glorious hour ! oh, blest abode !  
I shall be near, and like, my God ;  
And flesh and sin no more control  
The sacred pleasures of the soul.

My flesh shall slumber in the ground,  
Till the last trumpet's joyful sound ;  
Then burst the chains, with sweet surprise,  
And in my Saviour's image rise !



# PRAYERS OF THE ANCIENTS,

AN EXCITEMENT TO THE DEVOTION OF AGED CHRISTIANS.

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—————Jehovah's ear  
Is ever open to his children's cry :  
No enemy can intercept the flight  
Of supplication on its way to God ;  
For he that gives desire its seraph wings,  
Guards it to heav'n, and, rapid as its course,  
Brings down an answer to the waiting saint.

SWAIN.

ONE would be disposed to imagine that a pious Christian of advanced years would need no direction to urge his way to the throne of mercy, or to be informed that the breath of prayer is the effect of that new and spiritual life which the Spirit of Christ communicates to the soul of man on his being born again of God. Still persons need continually to be reminded, that while prayer is the rational duty of a dependent creature to an independent Creator, through the Gospel of the grace of God it also becomes the high privilege of every believing soul ; and is the means of

receiving continued blessings from the hand of his God, and of constituting a material part of his heaven upon earth. Those who have for many years known something of "the life of faith," are practically convinced that other duties may be performed with comparative ease, and without much obstruction; but there is that spirituality and that holy reverence necessary in order to enjoy communion with God in prayer and supplication, that *when he would do this good thing*, like Paul, he has to say, "evil is present with me." The good man deplores an evil heart within him, prone to depart from his God; and Satan seldom fails by his temptations to fill his mind with fears and wandering thoughts, and more especially so when he would desire to close his devotions with elevated desires and solemn reverence, for then it too often occurs that the heart sinks, and the mind wanders, so that instead of composure he endures confusion. From these imperfections in devotional exercises, it is not unusual for a pious person to imagine that his case is singular. He concludes bitter things against himself, and calls in question, whether he ever did possess that grace which has led others to enjoy sensible communion with their God and Saviour. All these complaints will teach the reader how necessary it is to seek every aid that may facilitate his more spiritual devotions, and the great importance of his receiving the Spirit of God to help his infirmities. All hinderances to the throne of mercy chiefly arise from the want of more active

faith in the word and promises of God, and especially from the want of a clear knowledge and an abiding impression upon the mind, by which he may realize that new and consecrated way in which alone communion with God can be enjoyed. In no single verse of Scripture is this way more clearly pointed out than in eighteenth verse of the second chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians, "For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father," which, for your instruction, I will thus paraphrase. "'For' such is the efficacy of Christ's atoning, reconciling death upon the cross, and the sum and substance of real religion in the soul, 'through him,' Christ the Redeemer and everliving Intercessor, 'we both,' believing Jews and Gentiles, 'have access' to the throne of grace in prayer and supplication 'by one Spirit,' who quickeneth the mind and heart, giveth us faith and boldness to draw near to 'the Father,' with freedom and holy reverence to receive the blessings we need, and the assurances of his love." This comprises the whole substance of religion in communion with God, but it is too true that the remains of our carnal nature operate against it; and whatsoever other duties we may perform, without communion with God in this his own way, we shall come short of true peace and consolation. Let the reader, therefore, devoutly meditate upon this valuable text of Scripture; it will afford him a fine discovery how each of the divine Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, are mutually engaged in ad-

mitting him to the throne of grace on earth, to meet him eternally, to stand before the throne of glory in heaven.

It is certain that in proportion as a Christian habitually lives in near and intimate communion with his God and Saviour, whether in the silent aspirations of his heart, or secret prayer in his closet, so will he be in the performance of all public duties, and equally so will be his submission and support under the afflictions which he may be called to endure. The aged person who reads this paper, I presume must be more or less acquainted with what I have written ; and now, under the weight of years, nothing can be more desirable than greater communion with his heavenly Father. The example of others, who by prayer have walked in nearness to the Lord, must be highly interesting to him, as they form an incitement to copy their example. Under this impression I have attempted to make a selection of some of those devout petitions which were presented to the Lord by his ancient saints, and are left on record in the Holy Scriptures. This will be like opening the door of their private chamber, by which he may realize their persons bowing their knees in humility, and presenting their petitions at the throne of their God and Father. By reading the copy of their prayers, he will also perceive that they were conversant with similar infirmities, afflictions, temptations, pains, and sorrows, of which he so often complains. Besides, he will hereby be convinced

that there is a coincidence in the experience and the prayers of God's people in all ages of the world, and the knowledge of this may have a tendency to remove some of the doubts and fears which he indulges concerning his own. As God was pleased to hear and answer their petitions, and carried them through their sorrows, crowning their last days with peace, and at last receiving them to himself in everlasting blessedness, so he may cultivate increasing confidence in the faithful promises of his God and Saviour, that instead of forsaking him in his enfeebled age, and casting him away from his presence, he will fulfil in him the work of faith with power, and that he shall receive the end of his faith, even the complete salvation of his soul, in everlasting happiness! In selecting the petitions of the ancient servants of the Lord, I have so connected them, that he may either read them as one whole prayer, or select the single parts, as most adapted to his own feelings, while the chapter and verse will form a directory, should he wish to examine the passage.

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### THE PRAYER.

LORD, thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art

God. Psalm xc. 1, 2. Give ear to my words, O Lord, consider my meditation. Hearken unto the voice of my cry, my King, and my God: for unto thee will I pray. My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up. Psalm v. 1—3.

Thou art my hope, O Lord God: thou art my trust from my youth. By thee have I been holden up from the womb: thou art he that took me out of my mother's bowels: my praise shall be continually of thee. Psalm lxxi. 5, 6.

In the day when I cried thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul. Though I walk in the midst of trouble, thou wilt revive me: thou shalt stretch forth thine hand against the wrath of mine enemies, and thy right hand shall save me. The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me: thy mercy, O Lord, endureth for ever: forsake not the works of thine own hands. Psalm cxxxviii. 3, 7, 8.

O God, thou hast taught me from my youth: and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works. Now also when I am old and grey-headed, O God, forsake me not; until I have showed thy strength unto this generation, and thy power to every one that is to come. Psalm lxxi. 17, 18.

I am feeble and sore broken : I have roared by reason of the disquietness of my heart. Lord, all my desire is before thee ; and my groaning is not hid from thee. My heart panteth, my strength faileth me : as for the light of mine eyes, it also is gone from me. Psalm xxxviii. 8—10.

It is good for me that I have been afflicted ; that I might learn thy statutes. Psalm cxix. 71. Thy vows are upon me, O God : I will render praises unto thee. For thou hast delivered my soul from death : wilt not thou deliver my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the light of the living ? Psalm lvi. 12, 13.

Thou, which hast showed me great and sore troubles, shalt quicken me again, and shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth ; thou shalt increase my greatness, and comfort me on every side. Psalm lxxi. 20, 21.

Cast me not off in the time of old age ; forsake me not when my strength faileth. Psalm lxxi. 9. Lord, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is ; that I may know how frail I am. Behold, thou hast made my days as an hand breadth ; and mine age as nothing before thee. Spare me that I may recover strength, before I go hence, and be no more. Psalm xxxix. 4, 5, 13. So teach

me to number my days, that I may apply my heart unto wisdom. Psalm xc. 12.

Be merciful unto me, O Lord: for I cry unto thee daily. Rejoice the soul of thy servant: for unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul. For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy to all that call upon thee. Psalm lxxxvi. 3—6. Mine age is departed, and is removed from me as a shepherd's tent: thou wilt cut me off with pining sickness: from day even to night wilt thou make an end of me. O Lord, I am oppressed; undertake for me. Isaiah xxxviii. 12, 14.

I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me. Let, I pray thee, thy merciful kindness be for my comfort, according to thy word unto thy servant. Let thy tender mercies come unto me, that I may live: for thy law is my delight. Let my heart be sound in thy statutes; that I may not be ashamed. Psalm cxix. 75, 76, 77, 80.

And now, Lord, what wait I for? My hope is in thee. Psalm xxxix. 7. Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterwards receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. Psalm lxxiii. 24, 25. All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come. Thou shalt call, and



I will answer thee: thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands. Job xiv. 14, 15. Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation. Luke ii. 29, 30. Into thine hand, I commit my spirit: thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, God of truth. Psalm xxxi. 5. To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen. Romans xvi. 27.

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**AGED FRIEND.** What rich and abundant encouragement does the Gospel contain to stimulate your devotions, and direct your steps in communion with God! Borne down with the length of your journey, the trials of your life, the infirmities of your body and mind, while the long home gradually appears in sight, you cannot but desire to cultivate an increasing solicitude for more sensible communion with your God and Saviour. To enjoy this invaluable privilege, you may feel the assurance that there is a throne sprinkled with the blood of Christ, and that your fainting heart is cheered by the united invitation of the apostles and primitive saints. "Let us come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." Hebrews iv. 16. It is further increased by the persuasion, that "Christ ever liveth to make intercession for us," and that he is the "angel that stands at the altar, having a golden censer; to whom was given

much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand." Revelation viii. 3, 4. Prayer in no form can be pleasing to the Almighty, unless offered "in spirit and in truth;" it is therefore a further encouragement to you, that the Spirit is promised to "help our infirmities," raising the powers of the soul in faith, adoration, and love, before the throne of his mercy. To confirm your expectation that God will hear your prayers, he has recorded many great and precious promises, such as this, "It shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear." Isaiah lxxv. 24. To all these excitements may be added the testimony of David, and the saints of God in all ages, who have said, "It is good for me to draw near to God." Remember, therefore, my aged friend, that communion with God is the life and substance of religion, the greatest source of strength and consolation, and is one of the best means to wean you from the world, and ripen you for the inheritance of glory.

## ON PASSING OVER JORDAN.

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On Jordan's rugged banks I stand,  
And cast a wishful eye  
To Canaan's fair and happy land,  
Where my possessions lie.

When shall I reach that happy place,  
And be for ever blest ?  
When shall I see my Father's face,  
And in his presence rest ?

ANON.

**ST. PAUL** assures us, that "whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, that we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope." Of course the more frequently we read the sacred volume, the more our knowledge will increase, our faith be confirmed, and our patience excited, while we are passing through this wilderness of sorrow. In the history and disposition of the Israelites, we may very materially perceive a resemblance to our own; and as the river Jordan divided the wilderness from the delightful land of Canaan, so death separates us from the world, and leads to the

final state of rest in heaven, which remaineth for the people of God. As the aged reader and the writer of this article may not be very far from the Jordan of death, we will select some of the more prominent circumstances recorded concerning this extraordinary passage of the Israelites, and from them attempt to learn a few instructive and animating lessons, which may inspire us with greater confidence in the Lord, when we shall be called to pass through death to an eternal state.

Israel had now been wandering in the wilderness nearly forty years. Moses died, and the people mourned for him with great solemnity thirty days in the plains of Moab. Joshua, who had succeeded Moses, now took the command of the host of Israel, and their mourning was turned into joy! At this period the Lord appeared unto his servant Joshua, bidding him be of good courage, to arise and go over Jordan, for he would put the people in possession of the promised inheritance. Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people, saying, "Pass through the host, and command the people, saying, Prepare you victuals; for within three days ye shall pass over this Jordan, to go in to possess the land, which the Lord your God giveth you to possess it." This was necessary, as the manna had ceased to fall so plentifully, and the people had been allowed to eat of the cattle and the corn which they had recently taken from their conquered enemies. Early in the morning forty thousand men of war marched from

Shittim about seven miles, and rested on the east side of Jordan, leaving the rest behind to guard their possessions. Joshua ordered that twelve men should take up the ark of the Lord and go before the people, leaving a space between them of two hundred cubits, or three-quarters of a mile. When they arrived at the river, it had overflowed its banks; they saw no means to pass over; no ferry boats, such as David and his household had when they passed over the same stream; but Joshua assured the people that the Lord God would do wonders among them that day. On so signal an occasion it is not surprising that Joshua should require the people "to sanctify themselves," which was usually performed by washing their persons and apparel, and especially by devoting themselves to the God of Israel, who was now about to deliver them from the wilderness, and to place them in the good land of promise. The priests, in confidence of the power of the Almighty, which forty years ago had been displayed at the Red Sea, obeyed the orders of his servant Joshua; they took up the ark, advanced to the river, and instantly, as their feet touched the water, behold! the stream divided, and on the one hand stood up an heap, as a brazen wall, while on the other it flowed downward, and left a dry passage of several miles for the people to pass over. Arriving at the middle of the passage the ark rested, and there remained until the forty thousand men had passed over and entered the land of Canaan. After Joshua had commanded the priests to follow with the

ark, twelve men, one out of each tribe, took each of them a large stone, and piled them up in the bed of the river where the ark had rested, there to remain as a sign to the future generations of Israel, and a memorial of the goodness, faithfulness, and power of the Lord their God. Who but must be astonished at God's display of almighty power in favor of this ancient race of people! After having endured severe bondage in Egypt four hundred years, the Lord, with an outstretched arm, divided the water of the Red Sea, and delivered them from the cruel hand of their enemies; and after having borne with their rebellious manners in the wilderness forty years, he was now a second time about to display his power over the same element of water, and to conduct them to Canaan. These things unite to lead us to a holy admiration and to the praise of Jehovah's grandeur and glory! and should excite us to trust his faithful care amidst the waters of affliction through which we have to pass, before we reach the happy rest above.

This short sketch of the history of the Israelites in passing over Jordan will be sufficient for the present to revive your recollection of that remarkable event, and will aid me to make a few reflections upon it, as an emblem of our passing over the Jordan of death, to the inheritance of immortality and glory.

I. Israel consisted of twelve tribes. They were the people of the Lord by a national covenant, and

the sign of their right and title to it was their circumcision. The spiritual Israel of God, as described particularly in the New Testament, both of Jews and Gentiles, are made so by virtue of the covenant of grace and peace between our everlasting Father and his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, ratified and confirmed in his blood, as the blood of the everlasting covenant. Now as it was literally the people Israel, and they only who were so miraculously led through Jordan in safety to the land of rest, we should seek to possess the personal evidence of interest in the spiritual Israel, by the circumcision of the heart, in order to confirm our hope of being conducted through death to eternal blessedness. In the New Testament it is thus described, "we are the circumcision, which worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." Philippians iii. 3. "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature." Galatians vi. 15. If the Lord has therefore made you a partaker of this gracious change, you know something what it means to have your heart circumcised by the Spirit, to the putting away the filth of the flesh, that you may love and serve the Lord while in the wilderness of this world, so that you may be confident, that as ancient Israel went out of Egypt "to go into the land of Canaan, and into the land of Canaan they came," so the Lord will not forsake you in this wilderness of sorrow, but will give you a safe and triumphant

passage through the Jordan of mortality, to the happy rest which is above.

II. The Israelites were forty years in their march through the wilderness to Canaan, whereas God might have led them a direct way by the hand of Moses, in less than so many weeks. This will teach you that after the Saviour had visited you in early life, and given you to drink of the cup of his mercy, he might have speedily transmitted you to an eternity of happiness, without leaving you so many years to wander in this wilderness of misery. For in the course of our years, we have known many young persons in the lovely bloom of religion, and also some young ministers of the most promising talents, who came up as a flower, were speedily cut down and laid in the dust, and their spirits were transmitted to immortality. Do you ask the reason why the Lord has permitted you to remain so many years in this wilderness, and to endure so many storms of deep distress? It is to prove the reality of your faith, your patience, and your love, and likewise to make the Canaan of eternal rest the sweeter when the waters of Jordan shall divide, that you may pass over and be enabled triumphantly to sing "to him which led his people through the wilderness, for his mercy endureth for ever." Psalm cxxxvi. 16.

III. As the river Jordan divided the wilderness from the land of Canaan, so death lies between us



and the eternal rest in heaven, for "it is appointed unto all men once to die," therefore, of course, we must go through the Jordan of death. There was something very striking in the address of Joshua to the Israelites upon this occasion, when he said unto them, "Ye have not passed this way heretofore." Chap. iii. 4. No, they had heard of Jordan, and they had been very near the stream, but they were ordered back again. And have not we, by severe sickness, in our own apprehension, been brought within sight of death, but by God's delivering hand restored to health, and turned back again to travel yet longer in the thorny wilderness? When the people actually came to Jordan, the ground, the water, and the surrounding scenery, were altogether new to them; and while they saw Jordan at the same time overflowing its banks, and no visible means by which they were to pass over, all these must have excited a variety of conjectures in their minds, and painful feelings in their breasts. To relieve their conflicting minds, Joshua informs them what the Lord would do for them, that the waters should divide, the ark should go over before them, and that they should all pass over in safety to possess the land. This case is too much like our own; we have read and heard of death, and we have seen others pass away in death before us, yet we often heave the plaintive sigh, and say, How shall it be with us when we come to die? There is a passage in the twelfth chapter of Jeremiah and the fifth verse, which is so

appropriate to this subject, that I cannot forbear introducing it. "If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses? and if in the land of peace, wherein thou trustedst, they wearied thee, then how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan? Waving the literal meaning of this text in application to the then afflicted state of the Jewish nation, I will make a comment upon it in application to ourselves. "If thou hast run with the footmen," the ordinary trials of human life, "and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses?" the more swift, strong temptations and sufferings of Satan and the world; "and if in the land of peace, wherein thou trustedst," for we have been too much attached to this world, notwithstanding our disappointments and vexations, "and they have wearied thee, then," after all these, "what wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan," the last, the severest, and the final conflict in death? What wilt thou do? Look to the better Joshua, the Lord Jesus! For as Joshua of old relieved the painful anxiety of the people, by assuring them that the waters should open, and the ark of the Lord be with them, so the Lord Jesus will show you that by his death and resurrection he has divided the waters of death, the evil is removed, his presence, as the true ark, shall be with you, and convey you to the true Canaan of everlasting felicity!

IV. The order which Joshua gave to the officers,

that the people should prepare them food before they passed over Jordan, will give you another useful lesson. Chap. i. 10, 11. In regard to temporal supplies for our latter years, it cannot be incorrect for a good man so to guide his affairs with discretion, that if Providence favor his design, he may lay up something in store, when the infirmities of age may prevent him from labor. For this reason it is we are sent to "the ant to learn her ways and be wise, for she provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest," for future use; and if this admonition was reduced to practice, many aged people might enjoy their own comforts, without being dependent on charity. But I will recommend to you what is superior to animal food, "for man cannot live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God," and this is food for the soul. Job and David esteemed the word of their God more than their necessary food, and it was sweeter to their taste than honey, or the honey-comb, in the midst of all their sufferings. Therefore pray more fervently, that the Spirit of the Lord, who indited the word, may increase your faith, that by reading and meditation your memory may be stored with its holy doctrines, precious promises, and divine precepts, particularly such as are most adapted to old age. By this means your mind and experience will be more established, a settled peace in Christ will rest in your conscience, and it will be as heavenly food to nourish and strengthen your soul, when the waters of

death shall divide to admit you to an eternal state of felicity. Happy is that aged Christian, as a true Israelite, who is in the habit of thus going to the word of his God, to "prepare for himself victuals" against the day of his final departure!

V. On this memorable occasion "Joshua said unto the people, Sanctify yourselves: for to-morrow the Lord will do wonders among you. Chap. iii. 5. If ceremonial sanctification by washing and devoting themselves to the Lord, was necessary for the Israelites, when on the morrow he was to do wonders among them by miraculously dividing the waters, and conducting them to Canaan, it is certain that spiritual sanctification "in body, soul, and spirit," is indispensably necessary for those especially whose age and infirmities teach them to anticipate a speedy departure from this world of sorrow. Personal sanctification is alone the work of the Spirit of God in the soul of man, and can only be applied to us as evinced in the exercise of all those graces, and the performance of those sacred duties which are the result of that new spiritual life, which Christ bestows. When Joshua ordered the people to prepare their victuals, he assured them, that in three days they should go over Jordan; but when he required them to sanctify themselves, two of those days had gone, and only the morrow left, when the liquid passage was to be opened. I know not how we should feel, were the like order given to us, that within three

days, or on the morrow, we should depart this life, for we are of the earth, earthy, and too fond of the things of this world. Still we should not forget that Jesus, our better Joshua, has not given us three days warning; on the contrary, he says, "Be ye also ready, for the Son of man cometh in an hour when ye think not of it;" and often is this verified in the sudden death both of young and old. Let all these solemn considerations impress your mind with the imperious necessity of an habitual preparation to meet the final call of your God and Saviour! We have the strongest arguments to untie the cord of love to this world, for we must speedily leave it behind; but to disengage ourselves from the corrupt body of sin, or mortify and subdue the evil propensities of our nature, so as to walk humbly with God to the brink of Jordan, these effects can be produced only by the sufficient grace of our Lord Jesus. Here every heart knows its own bitterness. Corrupt passions are to be mortified, doubts and fears to be silenced, temptations to be overcome, and all the powers of the soul brought into an habitual communion with God in peace and love; these are of the greatest consequence! Under any or all of these evils, incessantly plead for the sanctifying influences of the Spirit of God, which will lead you by faith, "to the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness," flowing from a Saviour's pierced heart, and thus give you strength to "to perfect holiness in the fear of God." This too will be like trimming your lamp,

girding up the loins of your mind, and waiting for the Bridegroom's coming. And as the Israelites who passed over Jordan were "armed men," it will lead you to "put on the whole armor of God," described in the sixth chapter of Ephesians, and excite you to see that all its parts are clean and bright, and hang so well upon you, as to be ready for use in the last conflict. Thus we may be said to sanctify ourselves, waiting for the Lord's signal to see his wonders, and the glorifying of himself in that last hour when we shall pass away, to return no more.

VI. The appointed morning arrived that Israel must leave the wilderness, but it is impossible for us to describe the sensations they felt upon the interesting occasion. That day will assuredly come when we must bid a final farewell to the world and all around us; and what then will be our feelings? When the people removed from their tents, they were commanded to follow the ark of the covenant of their God, who had promised to give them the land of rest, and which was a symbol of the Divine presence for their protection. So we also are exhorted to follow the Lord Jesus as our "Forerunner," who for us has passed through death to immortal joys, and has promised to preserve us unto his eternal kingdom and glory. They came to the bank of Jordan, and lodged there for the last night in the wilderness. By the good hand of God upon us, we have arrived to old age, and here we take up our

lodging by the side of the grave. So true is the admonition of the Saviour, "work while it is called to-day, for the night cometh, when no man can work." Observing the motion of the ark advancing to the water, every Israelite must have been in the utmost anxiety to see its effect, according to the assurance of Joshua. God might indeed have commanded a severe cold wind to blow upon the waters, so as to congeal them into ice, sufficient in an ordinary way for the people to walk over; but how great must have been their astonishment, when they saw that no sooner had the feet of the priests touched the edge of the waters than they instantly divided, rushed back in majestic grandeur, and left the bed of the river perfectly dry. Well might David, when celebrating the wonders of the Almighty, in the 114th Psalm, exclaim in an ecstacy, "What ailed thee, O thou sea, that thou fleddest? thou Jordan, that thou wast driven back?" From this, let those who all their life time have been subject to bondage through fear of death, learn to trust in the faithful promise of the Lord, "that as thy day, so shall be thy strength;" and whatever gloomy doubts may depress the mind, God at the last extremity can show the waters of death divided, deliver you from fear, and turn your mourning into joy. As the priests rested the sacred ark in the middle of the passage, all the people, as they passed over, could not but see it, and receive an evidence of its protection, as the symbol of the strength of the Lord, and an assurance that they

should not be overwhelmed by the return of the waters. Our true Ark of safety, the Lord Jesus, rested three days and three nights in the awful waters of death in the grave, and bore its dreadful curse; but by his resurrection he divided the waters, and made a passage for all his redeemed to pass through in safety. And now that blessed Redeemer is to be seen by faith in the midst of the waters of death, to give strength and courage to his dying saints to pass through and magnify the glory of his grace, for he hath said, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." So that with David you may confidently say, "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me. Two piles, each containing twelve stones, were erected as memorials of the Lord's power and glory, manifested on this occasion; one in the bed of the river where the ark stood, and one other on the opposite shore, that the generations to come might know the event, and celebrate the praises of the God of Israel. And shall we have no stones of grateful memorial to erect, when we pass through death? no dying testimony to leave behind us of God's everlasting love, the complete salvation of Jesus, the life-giving operations of the Holy Spirit, his kind and faithful care of us through this wilderness of sorrow, and our firm hope in his immutable promise for an eternal inheritance? Shall we have no farewell testimony to leave behind us, that our children, and all who may then surround us, may be encouraged to trust in the Saviour's power



and love? God forbid! But may we find that remarkable promise verified, "at evening time it shall be light." Zechariah xiv. 7. On the other side of Jordan I know we shall erect a memorial, for all who have passed to that delightful shore incessantly sing, "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to whom be glory and dominion for ever and ever." Revelation i. 5, 6. Therefore let us pray that we may live by faith, and walk in love, and we shall know something what it means, that "precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints," and pass through Jordan to be in the presence of the Lord, where is fulness of joy, and at whose right hand there are pleasures for evermore.



## ON THE PROMISES OF GOD.

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Engrav'd as in eternal brass  
The faithful promise shines ;  
Nor can the powers of darkness rase  
Those everlasting lines.

Oh, might I hear thy heav'nly tongue  
But whisper, "Thou art mine !" <sup>o</sup>  
Those gentle words should raise my song  
To notes almost divine.

WATTS.

IN the Christian's walk with God, and his daily course through this world of conflict, in hope of endless bliss, it is of great importance that he should possess a correct knowledge of the nature and benefit of the promises which God has recorded in the scriptures. Not so much as to their number, variety, and adaptation to all the possible cases of the Christian life, but as to the manner how God has made them to man, and to the way by which we are to receive their accomplishment. If such knowledge be of utility in the more active scenes of the good man's early days, it certainly must be more so in his old

age, when he becomes more sensible that there is no comfort to be enjoyed but from God, through the medium of those promises. Impressed with the importance of this subject, I purpose to offer a few considerations on the manner how God becomes a promising God to man ; how the promises are applied to the mind, so that you may correctly make use of them ; and then I will point out a few of those promises which are peculiarly adapted to aged Christians, in the hope that the Lord may thereby increase your faith, and teach you how to make use of them for your personal refreshment.

You cannot be too well persuaded that to man, as a "transgressor," God could not possibly make any promise ; on the contrary, all his threatenings are against the sinner, and we know that "the wages of sin is death." Romans vi. 23. However unfavorably this may at first thought be received, both Scripture and reason will justify the assertion, and it cannot make too strong an impression upon the mind. It is evident that the precepts of the law of God, which we have transgressed, must be fulfilled ; and his justice, which we have provoked, must be satisfied, otherwise no promise of mercy or favor could be made to the guilty. This restitution certainly cannot be made by the sinner himself. He is judicially lost as a criminal under condemnation for his transgressions, and the way of relief must come as an act of grace from God alone. It is worthy of observation, as elucidating this important point, that in no civilized

or heathen country has there ever been known to exist a law which, while it denounced a penalty against a transgressor, did at the same time make a promise or condition of forgiveness on the acknowledgment and repentance of the offender. If, therefore, no such human law ever existed, how may we presume to look to the most high God for a promise of mercy, while provoked justice bars the way against us, as much as it did against disobedient Adam, when the cherubim with a drawn sword prevented his returning to the Paradise he had forfeited? Like him we must submit to judgment, which we are told, in the fifth chapter to the Romans, "has passed upon all men to condemnation, for that all have sinned;" so that God himself must reveal a way for our restoration, in harmony with his law, his justice, and every other perfection of his glorious majesty, or his threatenings must be executed against us. Happy for us that our offended God hath provided, consecrated, and revealed, such a new and living way for the restoration and pardon of his fallen people, as to bring glory to himself in the highest, peace on earth, and good will towards man! and at the same time to justify himself in giving exceeding great and precious promises for our benefit. This grace and this mercy are only to be known by the Gospel, wherein we learn that Jesus, the Son of God, became our Surety and Redeemer; who in our stead has magnified the law which we have violated, by the personal obedience and sacrifice of his own life, and satisfied its penalties

honorably, by the offering of his body upon the cross, as an atonement for our sins. Thus having borne the threatenings of God's transgressed law against us, he ascended up on high, and was exalted at the Father's right hand as a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and remission of sin. In him the Father hath also deposited all fulness, both of grace and glory, to be communicated to his redeemed, to bring them near to himself, to supply the variety of all their wants in this vale of tears, and eventually to prepare them for his glory for ever! It is therefore of the greatest consequence to the exercise of your faith, and your communion with God, to view all the promises in the hand of Christ, who, as your Surety, is engaged to fulfil them to you, while all those promises are so many directories to your mind to inform you of the inexhaustible blessings contained in his fulness for the benefit of his people. It is therefore declared, that "all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us." 2 Corinthians i. 20. All these promises are *yea* and *Amen*, that is, visible, consistent, and certain, so that not one of them shall either deceive or fail; all being ratified and confirmed irrevocably by the blood of Christ, and by the oath of God, to give his people the greatest assurance and the strongest consolation. Hebrews vi. Therefore pray that you may have a right view of this important subject: for if a correct knowledge of these promises, and how they are to be received, make them essential

in the life of faith to every Christian, how much more so to those who are advanced in age, whose senses fail, and whose passions and feelings are frequently as variable as the wind ! and blessed are they who trust in the Lord alone, "for not one word which he hath spoken shall fail." Joshua xxi. 45.

Perhaps you may ask, "What is the ground or warrant for a person to plead with God for the fulfilment of a promise when under distress or suffering?" I grant that this is highly necessary to be understood, for our unbelieving hearts are prone to pervert the promises, while Satan, at the same time, will shoot his evil dart of temptation, and you will say, "This is not for me." Besides, a person having long walked in darkness, and endured the severity of afflictions, thereby wearing down the powers of his mind almost to despondency, which is sometimes the case of an aged person ; such a one needs instruction how to plead with God to grant him the blessings he has promised to bestow. Especially when in addition to all such afflictive feelings, the heart is impressed with a sense of the unfruitfulness of its life, and there is the discomposure of conscience, and the bowing down with the weight of the whole body of sin ; I say, no wonder in such a case that a right to the promises of God should be called in question. As a general answer to the proposed question, I may say, that the promises of God in his word, are to be received "by faith ;" and the faithfulness of God who promised, is the promised, is the ground of our plea,

for the Lord cannot deny himself. Thus Abraham “staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; being fully persuaded, that what he had promised, he was able also to perform.” Romans iv. 20, 21. Therefore I will suppose that you hold in your hand a draft upon a bank, whose credit you believe to be firm, and your faith in the genuineness of it forms the ground and warrant for your confidence for its payment. In like manner exercise faith in the promise of your God; go in humble prayer to the throne of grace for the blessing, and you will not be disappointed; at the same time bear in remembrance that every promise, as the bank note of heaven bears the name of the Lord Jesus, in whom other promises are deposited, and who is engaged for their fulfilment. I will give you another plain view of the promises not generally stated, as their importance requires, which may lead you to discover the reason for your faith to make use of them. If you look at the promises, you will perceive that they combine within them the *character* of those for whom, and to whom, they are made. For instance, those well known promises in Isaiah xli. 17, 18, and Matthew xi. 28. In the former, “the poor and needy seeking water and finding none,” whether for temporal or spiritual supplies; in the latter, the “weary,” who “labor and are heavy laden,” whether with the burdens of life, or the sins and sorrows of the soul. Both these characters are plainly described, and to whom the



promise of supply of "water" and "rest" are most graciously made. If the afflictive case be yours, then the character described, and the promise made, give you a twofold right to go to the Saviour for supply and for the rest which you so much need; for indeed you are the person therein described, and none else will either ask or need them. For your further encouragement I will add a thought or two on the Spirit of God, who in Ephesians i. 13, is called the "Spirit of promise." Not only that God promised him in the Old Testament, and has given him in the New, and that it is his office to seal the saints of God, giving them an earnest of the promised heavenly inheritance; but that he inspired holy men of old to write all the promises in the Bible; but likewise, as "the Spirit of promise," he makes use of them as seals in the heart, leaving their impression there, whereby an assurance of interest in them is attained, and leads you to God in prayer to receive the blessings promised. Now, as the Spirit of promise, you should seek his aid to help your infirmities, to show you what they are, and your right to them; strengthen your faith to believe God in them, and then you will take them in your hand to the throne of mercy, and know the true meaning of what it is to pray in faith, and take God at his word. And remember also that it is the office of this Spirit of promise to convey the blessing promised from the fulness of Christ to you, for your own personal enjoyment; for the Saviour hath said, "When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he

shall glorify me; for he shall take of mine, and show it unto you." John xiv. This, you will therefore perceive, is God's way of fulfilling his promises, and I hope you will esteem it as your way also of seeking the blessings which you incessantly need.

This short sketch is purposely drawn to refresh the aged reader's mind on a subject so intimately connected with his peace, comfort, and hope. Although we may have known the way of God in making and fulfilling his promises, yet when the body and heart begin to fail, we need continued excitement for the increase of our confidence in the God of our salvation. The Scriptures abound with testimony of the faithfulness of God to his promises. As a proof of this, Solomon speaks on the behalf of ancient Israel, "Blessed be the Lord, that hath given rest unto his people Israel, according to all that he promised: there hath not failed one word of all his good promise, which he promised by the hand of Moses his servant." 1 Kings viii. 56. In the course of your long life it is hoped that you have had many testimonies of the Lord's mercy, forbearance, loving-kindness, and faithfulness, under the diversified scenes through which you have passed; and therefore you will leave a still more noble testimony behind you of his goodness and faithfulness when laying upon your dying bed, and passing away to return no more. To encourage you still to urge your way, and meet your last conflict in holy triumph, agreeably to my design, I shall close this paper by copying a few of those promises recorded

in the Bible, as most adapted to the aged, and from which you may select such as are most suited to your case and your desires. I hope the Lord may give you faith to receive them, and trust in them, so as to derive all the benefits which they are intended to convey; thus going on rejoicing in the Lord, in prospect of everlasting happiness with Christ in glory!

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### PROMISES ADAPTED TO THE AGED.

Hearken unto me, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel, which are borne by me from the belly, which are carried from the womb: and even to your old age I am he; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you. Isaiah xlv. 3, 4.

And thine age shall be clearer than the noon day: thou shalt shine forth, thou shalt be as the morning. Job xi. 17.

As thy days, so shall thy strength be. Deut. xxxiii. 25

They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing; to show that the Lord

is upright: and there is no unrighteousness in him.  
Psalm xcii. 14, 15.

The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found  
in the way of righteousness. Proverbs xvi. 31.

Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age, like  
as a shock of corn cometh in its season. Lo this,  
we have searched it, and know thou it for thy good.  
Job v. 26, 27.

Thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt  
be buried in a good old age. Genesis xv. 15.

Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have  
called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When  
thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee;  
and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee:  
when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be  
burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.  
For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel,  
thy Saviour. Isaiah xliii. 1—3.

Go thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest,  
and stand in thy lot at the end of the days.  
Daniel xii. 13.

It shall be one day which shall be known to the  
Lord, not day, nor night: but it shall come to pass,  
that at evening time it shall be light. Zechariah xiv. 7.

If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. 1 Thessalonians iv. 14.

For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee. Isaiah liv. 10.

Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. Revelation ii. 10.

Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. 1 Corinthians vii. 1.

NOTE. Reading the 119th Psalm by sections, you will perceive how charmingly David mixed his faith with the word and the promises of his God, and thus derived strength and consolation under the variety of his afflictions. May the Spirit of the Lord help you to do the same, and you will, with Sarah, the wife of Abraham, "judge him faithful who had promised."

#### THE BIBLE.

Give me the Bible in my hand,  
A heart to read and understand,  
And faith to trust the Lord :  
I'd sit alone from day to day,  
Or urge no company to stay,  
Nor wish to rove abroad.



## THE WIDOW ANNA.

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The *Hope of Earth* so long predicted,  
In all his *Father's* might appears !  
Ye righteous, rich in consolation,  
Glad tidings now salute your ears !  
See prophecy her page unfold ;  
The vision of the *Lamb* behold !

CITELTO.

GIVE me leave to introduce this venerable old widow to the attention of my female readers. Her history is short, but it is like a finely executed miniature, the more it is contemplated the more it will be admired, and inspire a desire in others to imitate. The Evangelist Luke has preserved her history in his second chapter, which only occupies three verses, perhaps the shortest space of any other person recorded in the Bible. Her name is Anna, which signifies *gracious*, and her character evinces the rich and abundant grace of God, which was communicated to her heart. It pleased God, who decrees the time for a man to be born, as well as a time for a man to die, that Anna should have the honor of living at the

very time when God should send forth his Son to be the Redeemer and Saviour of his people, and that she should enjoy the felicity of a personal sight of him in his infancy, just before she closed her aged eyes in death.

I. Let us first inquire concerning her family connexions. She was the daughter of Phanuel, who was supposed to have been a devout man of high esteem; his name signifying "the face of God." If his religious character corresponded with the import of his name, he could not but have been held in high estimation, for honorable and happy must be that man on whom the face of God shines, and whose constant delight is to walk in the light of God's countenance! The name, therefore, of this man is here preserved as an honor to himself, and as reflecting the most deserving praise on his pious daughter. Phanuel is said to have been of the tribe of Aser, the same with Asher, the very tribe on which Moses pronounced the following benediction: "Let Asher be blessed with children; let him be acceptable to his brethren, and let him dip his foot in oil. Thy shoes shall be iron and brass; and as thy days, so shall thy strength be." Deuteronomy xxxiii. 24, 25. Whatever it may have been with the father, it appears that Anna his daughter was no stranger to the virtues of that ancient benediction, for as her many days were, so was her strength from the God of Asher. She is further said to be a widow, having



endured the greatest of all natural afflictions, by resigning the object of her earthly affections to the cold recess of the grave; still her **MAKER** was her better husband, the Lord of Hosts is his name; and she resolved to consecrate her widowed days to his honor and service. Happy is that forlorn widow who has an ear and a heart open to the voice of the Almighty, who hath said, "I am a husband to the widow, and a father to the fatherless." Thus, although she may resolve to wear the widow's weeds for the remainder of her days, yet she has reason to rejoice in the brighter garments of God's salvation.

II. Luke informs us that Anna was of a great age, I would suppose much older than was generally the lot of females to live at that time. "She was a widow of about fourscore and four years; and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity." From this statement, without adverting to the age when the Jews considered their daughters marriageable, we will say, that she married at the age of twenty, seven years she lived with her husband, and then continued in widowhood eighty-four years, of course her full age at this time must have been one hundred and eleven. This is the greatest period of longevity recorded in the New Testament. Whether this was her real age or not, it is of greater consequence to know that the beauty of old persons is their gray hair, and that the hoary head is a crown

of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness. Therefore,

III. We will proceed to examine the marks of Anna's piety. She was a constant attendant on the public worship of the Lord, and she departed not from the temple night and day, that is, I presume whenever the service and worship of God were performed, morning, noon, or evening. What an honorable encomium is this upon pious though decrepit old age! The dimness of sight, the defect in hearing, or the tremor of limbs, could not detain her from the place where God's honor dwelleth, for there was her heart. The particular parts of Anna's devotion are also named. "She served God with fastings and prayers." By the one she expressed her sense of unworthiness, and by the other her constant dependence upon the God of her mercy. In these duties she did not act the part of a Pharisee, which was to be seen of men; but in them "she served God." Her heart was engaged, her faith was sincere, and her love was animated; all which puts a lustre upon her character, and adds solemnity to her devotions. Nor must it be omitted, that old Simeon, and many others in Jerusalem, waiting at the same time for "the consolation of Israel," the promised Messiah, the Child that was to be born, and the Son that was to be given, and who should suddenly come to the temple; and therefore this aged Israelite was now directing her prayers for

the fulfilment of this promise before she closed her eyes in death. It is further said, that Anna was a prophetess. We know that prophecies had ceased among the Jews four hundred years before the coming of Christ, and whether it was the same with this pious woman as it was with Simeon, to whom it was revealed that he should not die until he had seen the Lord Christ, it is to us immaterial. A prophet in the New Testament generally signifies no more than an instructor, and we may therefore conclude that Anna, from reading the Old Testament, and by her attendance at the temple, might have received a strong impression that the coming of the Messiah was at hand, and therefore she communicated her knowledge for the benefit of others. In this great event her expectations were realized ; for

IV. She came into the temple at the instant Joseph and Mary, according to the law of Moses, presented the infant Jesus before the Lord, and she saw Simeon take him in his arms. With profound joy she heard that venerable man exclaim, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word : for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people ; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel." Scarcely had he finished this pious ejaculation, when Anna, participating in the joyful scene, immediately lifted up her heart and praised God for a Saviour born ! Who can describe

the emotion of his soul on so interesting an occasion? Well might she give thanks to the Lord for fulfilling his promises so often repeated, and which she had so often read with believing anticipation; and well indeed might she express the gratitude of her soul for being preserved such a number of years, and that her journey's end should be crowned with a sight of the salvation of God. This, however, was not a momentary joy, for we are next informed,

V. That "she spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem." The character of his person, the Son of God, an Infant of days, born to save his people from their sins, bring in an everlasting righteousness, glory to God in the highest, and good will towards men; all these formed the delightful subject of her communication. Thus was she happily employed, possibly from house to house, conveying the glorious tidings of what she had seen and heard to the believing Jews, who knew that Daniel's weeks were expired, and were now waiting for redemption in Israel. How long this aged widow lived, or where she was buried, we are not informed. The only reflection with which we can conclude this paper is, that from the short history of her long life, we should make a pious effort for the improvement of our own.

Is my reader a widow in mourning, weeping at the loss of him in whom was placed all her earthly felicity? Then seek the Saviour's love, for he is a

friend that sticketh closer than a brother, and whose love can fill the aching void which death has made within your breast. Art thou left with orphan children clinging to thy feeble arms? Perhaps you say, "For these things I weep; mine eye runneth down with water, because the comforter that should relieve my soul is far from me; my children are desolate, because the enemy death prevailed." Lamentations i. 16. Under these painful circumstances listen to what the Lord has said, "I am a husband to the widow, and father to the fatherless." And in what numberless instances has it been proved, through successive ages, that "in him the fatherless findeth mercy." Or art thou like Anna, advanced in years, having lost thy bosom companion in early wedlock, travelling from year to year alone, and thy widow's weeds, like thyself, old and tattered by the afflictions of thy journey, and ready to sink beneath the stroke of death? Then, like Anna, lay up all your good in God; place all your confidence in a Saviour born, and in him, now glorified in heaven, you will assuredly find the widow's only consolation.

Let me recommend the example of Anna to my aged readers. She set her affections upon the house of her God; there she gave her constant attendance, and there she found her Saviour born for the confirmation of her faith, and the joy of her heart, and so shall it be with you. From her great age we may easily suppose this pious widow must have been extremely infirm, yet to the temple of the

Lord she would go as her best home upon earth, in anticipation of her eternal home in heaven. I know that the decrepitude of age, the defect of sight, and depression of hearing, may frequently be urged as an apology for abiding at home; but your Lord hath said, "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also;" and if your heart, like Anna's, be in the place where God's honor dwelleth, you will exert every effort to give your attendance. You have often been refreshed in the sanctuary of the Lord; there you were instructed in the riches of the Gospel; there you offered your prayers in affliction, and sung his praises for the inestimable mercies you received; and as your animal nature now declines apace, one would think your chief delight would be found in the ways of the Lord. Should your hearing be defective, that you cannot hear a whole sermon, you may catch a sentence, or a word, which may prove to you like a morsel of the bread, or a drop of the water of life, affording you spiritual refreshment. Indeed you are exhorted "by the mercies of God, to present your body a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. Romans xii. 1. Your decaying body has been preserved for very many years, and when death comes, you will cheerfully resign it to the hand of your Creator, in hope of a glorious resurrection; and these form strong arguments to make every public surrender of your person in the house of God, as though it should be your last. Besides, there is something so lovely and

encouraging to young persons to behold the aged in the house of God, that it cannot fail to enforce the duty upon them. It teacheth them that God has blessings to bestow both upon the aged and the young, that although nature wears out, grace grows stronger, and bears the richest fruit; and the Saviour Jesus is so good a Master, that old disciples can wish for no better, and still delight in his service. What a lustre does this cast upon the reality and the excellence of religion? Who but must perceive how admirably the expressions of gratitude to God, and good will to man, are combined in the pious conduct of this venerable female; she seems to have caught the accents of the angels in their song at the nativity. She first gave thanks unto the Lord, and then spake of Jesus to all them that looked for him in Jerusalem. Though her talent was nearly worn out, she made the best use of it possible in communicating these glad tidings to others; for, indeed, we cannot but speak of the things which we have seen and heard of the Saviour of man. While some may despise or reject the Redeemer, there are always more or less that cordially, if not anxiously, receive information so highly interesting to their immortal concerns. When such friendly instructions are communicated by the lips of the aged, who have tasted that the Lord is gracious, they seldom fail of being cordially received, and produce the most happy effects. Go thou therefore and do likewise!

As a conclusion to our present contemplations,

as Anna gave thanks for the sight of her Saviour, and that her life had been prolonged to so great an age, let us not be forgetful of our obligations to the Lord, that he has given us an hope in his Son, and lengthened our days to old age. Let this be our consolation and the theme of our song while we are so rapidly retiring from the trials and dangers of this vain world, in prospect of a world of felicity, which shall for ever endure! What the evidences were which Anna possessed of her interest in the Messiah that was to come, while in her more early years, is to us unknown, as her general history is not recorded. But possibly the aged person who reads this paper may have for many years professed the Gospel of salvation, without arriving to a desirable assurance of a personal interest in Christ the Lord. If so, the case of the widow Anna may afford encouragement. Her feet were directed to the temple at the very instant the Saviour was presented; she saw, her faith was confirmed, and her heart rejoiced. So may it be with you. The Spirit of Christ, through the testimony of his Gospel, can reveal the Saviour to your heart, so as to leave no room to doubt or hesitate that Christ is yours; and thus, instead of lingering in fear, you will possess a desire to depart and be with him in glory, in whose presence there is fulness of joy, and at whose right hand there are pleasures for evermore.



# THE SAINTS OF GOD

PERSONALLY KNOWING EACH OTHER IN HEAVEN.\*

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I count the hope no day-dream of the mind,  
No vision fair of transitory hue,  
The souls of those, whom once on earth we knew,  
And lov'd, and walk'd with in communion kind,  
Departed hence, again in heav'n to find.  
Such hope to nature's sympathies is true ;  
And such, we deem, the holy word to view  
Unfolds, an antidote for grief design'd,  
One drop from comfort's well. 'Tis true we read  
The Book of life : but if we read amiss,  
By God prepar'd fresh treasures shall succeed  
To kinsmen, fellows, friends, a vast abyss  
Of joy ; nor aught the longing spirit need,  
To fill its measure of enormous bliss.

BISHOP MANT.

**WHATEVER** relates to a state of existence beyond the grave must certainly be of the highest interest to man. To an aged Christian especially, who is advancing to his heavenly home, it must be a pleasing

\* Since the decease of the pious and venerable author of this discourse, the subject of the same has attracted much attention, and several excellent treatises have issued from the press, from the pens

inquiry, "Whether there he shall meet and personally know the happy individuals with whom he enjoyed the sweets of Christian fellowship while passing through this vale of tears?" There is certainly something in the expectation of such an enjoyment, that irresistibly entwines itself around the heart, while a contrary thought casts a gloom over the endearments of friendship. Some there are who have doubted, whether the supposition of the saints, personally knowing each other in heaven, is satisfactorily warranted by Scripture testimony, and therefore it is sufficient for them to believe that the final happiness of the redeemed will be infinitely complete by their glorified persons in the immediate presence of God and the Lamb for ever. Whether such persons may have felt sufficient interest in the subject, to induce them to search the Scriptures with suitable attention or not, should by no means prevent us from examining for ourselves; that if true, we may enjoy the comfort of it, and enhance our gratitude to the Lord of grace and glory. In order, therefore, to

of American Divines. Among these is a valuable little work, entitled "Recognition of Friends in another world."—By the Rev. Benjamin Dorr, D. D., Rector of Christ Church, Philadelphia. In this work, the reader will find a striking illustration of the subject, and many arguments for the establishment of the hope, that he may meet and know his pious friends, departed to another and better world. Reason and not fancy, controlled the pen of the much respected author of this small volume, which goes to illustrate and confirm the views of the venerated and honored author of the tract now before the reader. Dr. Dorr's work has proved so acceptable to the religious community, that it has reached the 5th edition, 1847.

make our inquiry the more easy and familiar, it will be presented in two parts, thereby allowing time for the reader to pause and indulge such reflections as the subject will naturally excite.

## THE FIRST PART.

Let us listen to the general voice of mankind upon the subject, for it is a fact, with the exception of a few individuals who disbelieve the Bible, and the immortality of the soul, and assert that death will extinguish their existence for ever, that there is a general impression on the minds both of good and bad men, that in futurity we shall know each other, whether they profess it or not. I cannot divest myself of an opinion, that this thought is instinctive in human nature, notwithstanding some good men may have had their doubts respecting it, which I imagine arise more from their incapacity to ascertain the precise medium or manner with which the knowledge may be communicated, than the fact itself. The argument of Addison on the belief of a future state, may have its weight in the present case. "The desire of man," says he, "after a future state of happiness, is a strong presumptive proof that such a state actually exists, otherwise God would not have implanted that desire in his breast." So in the present case, if total ignorance of each other is to be the lot of the righteous in heaven, how is it that the thought of

really knowing each other in futurity should so universally prevail?

It may perhaps be pleasing to the reader to be informed how strongly Socrates and Cicero, with the contemporaries of those great and admired sages of antiquity, were persuaded of meeting and personally knowing each other in a future state. "Who would not," says Socrates in his *Apology*, "part with a great deal to meet with Orpheus, Hesiod, Homer, &c.? If it be true that this is to be the consequence of death, I would even be glad to die often. What pleasure will it give to live with Palamedes and others who suffered unjustly, and to compare my fate with theirs? What an inconceivable happiness will it be to converse in another world with Sisyphus, Ulysses, and others, especially as those who inhabit that world shall die no more." Plato makes Socrates promise himself wonderful delight in a future state, in the company of Musæus, Hesiod, Homer, and other eminent men, who died before him. Cicero has this remarkable passage in his treatise on old age. Having mentioned Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, and others, he breaks out in this rapturous language, "O, glorious day! when I shall depart to that heavenly council and assembly of spirits, when I shall flee from this tumult and sink of corruption: For I shall not only meet those heroes concerning whom I have spoken, but even my Cato, better than whom was no man, none more renowned for piety; whose body I placed on that funeral pile, whereon

he ought to have laid mine. But his spirit not deserting me, still not unmindful of me, has gone to that country where he knew I was about to join him, which my misfortune, I seem to bear with fortitude, though I do not bear it with a contented mind. However, I shall console myself, reflecting that our separation shall not be long, and that I am about to quit this world." These quotations from those ancient heathen sages, who knew not the Scriptures, and only followed the dictates of their reason, are introduced merely to afford a natural conviction of the probability that mankind, after death, may be introduced into a future state, in which they should personally know and enjoy the society of each other as a great source of their happiness; and certainly this may be admitted as a presumptive evidence at least, that such a social state may possibly be enjoyed beyond the vale of death. But we have the Scriptures in our hand, which give us a sure ground of testimony, for we know that "our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, hath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel." 2 Timothy i. 10. We will now open the word of God as our directory, under a devout impression that if the saints of God in immortality shall certainly know each other, we shall therein find a sufficiency to produce a conviction of the truth. Nor can we indulge a doubt, but that this will materially add to the consolation and pleasure of the aged reader, who wishes more devoutly to realize

the vast scenes of eternity, to which he is so rapidly approaching.

Every one will confess that the personal knowledge of each other in this life is by the exercise of our senses; and if a union be formed between two or more persons, it is dictated by the social principle which is within us; and in the same manner human societies of every conceivable description have been, and still are, produced. From this persuasion we will attempt to examine the original constitution of man when first formed by the hand of his Creator, for however this may have been overlooked by those who have professed to think and write upon the subject of knowing each other in heaven, I shall be much mistaken if we do not here find strong grounds of such an expectation; and light will proceed from it to direct our inquiries, upon this most interesting subject.

By reading the second chapter of the book of Genesis, we may perceive that when God created our first parent Adam, he enriched his soul with what I will call a SOCIAL PRINCIPLE; and in accordance with this the Lord said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him." The Lord therefore formed Eve out of the man, brought the woman to him, "he knew her, and Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh." Besides, this social principle constituted a material part of his rationality, as it expanded to the enjoyment of his Creator, as well as

to his earthly companion; and certainly so long as they continued in innocency, its operation must have enhanced the charms and the bliss of Paradise! Still this principle was not in the absolute government of Adam; the Lord God placed "the tree of knowledge of good and evil" as a test or law of obedience, and therefore said unto him, "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." They did eat thereof, and it is afflicting to us to know the demoralizing effects which this act of disobedience produced upon their social principles, for the woman being first in the transgression, sacrificed her own and her husband's happiness; and when both had sinned, they fled to conceal themselves from the presence of their Creator. After their expulsion from Paradise, we see the various effects of this vitiated principle in their posterity, both in the line of *Cain* and in that of *Seth*, until the destruction of the old world by the general deluge.

In the history of mankind through successive generations, from the days of the flood to the present hour, nothing is more rational, and necessary to be believed, than that man is still under inviolable obligation to his Creator; and also that by knowledge of each other the inherent social principle is excited into action, and from thence is produced the bond of every kind of society which has existed, or does still exist, in the world, whether for good or evil purposes. And although, like Adam in Paradise, we see not the tree of knowledge of good and evil, yet God has not left us

without a law to convince us of his right to our affections and obedience, as well as to demand our love to each other. This law was delivered by the ministry of Moses in the Old Testament, and in the New it was divinely sanctioned and enforced by Jesus Christ, the Son of God. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it; Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."\* This is that universal law which binds all mankind to the authority of their Maker; it is the same in substance and design as the prohibition given to Adam in Paradise; it is the standard of human perfection that cannot be exceeded, and the least transgression thereof merits the punishment of death; it meets the powers of the soul both towards God and our fellow creatures; it forms the rationality of man, and is of perpetual and eternal duration. "For verily, I say unto you," said Jesus, "'Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." Matthew v. 18. Now where is the man that has obeyed this law? Has not all flesh corrupted its way upon the earth? Is not our foolish heart darkened? Are not our passions so contaminated with evil, that instead of loving God with all our heart, and our neighbor as

\* Deuteronomy vi. 5; Leviticus xix. 18; Matthew xxii. 37--40.



ourselves, it has been the very reverse? And had not God made provision for us in the council of his grace by the gift of his Son Jesus Christ, by whom his law was fulfilled, and the lapsed principle in man is restored, instead of recognizing each other in heaven, by the same social principles, we should only have known each other in future misery.

In the PERSON and holy life of Jesus, the Son of God, the second Adam, the Lord from heaven, we not only see the perfection of knowledge as the wisdom of God, but the social principle of humanity required by the law of our creation, shining with the most ineffable lustre! How sublime was his devotion, and how pure was his love to his Father, and how strong was his love to the guilty sons of men! You are told in the fourth chapter of Galatians, that "in the fulness of time God sent forth his Son, made of woman," to answer the first promise of restoration, and that he might take upon him a sinless human nature, "he was made under the law," that he might exemplify the virtues in his personal obedience, honor its precepts as our Surety, and by bearing its curse, "might redeem them that are under the law, so that we might receive the adoption of sons." This is not all, but with the adoption of sons, Christ, by his Spirit, regenerates the souls of his redeemed, that they become new creatures in Christ Jesus; spiritual knowledge is conveyed to their minds by the use of the Gospel, and the lapsed social principle of the soul is so happily restored, that such

persons are enabled "to call God, Abba, Father," and as such to love the Lord their God with all their mind, heart, and soul, and their neighbor as themselves. How astonishingly great is this change! The fallen creature man so saved, and so restored to the spirit of the law, as to love his Creator, and as a new creature to be under the law to Christ, and to love his God as his everlasting Father, from the principles of redeeming, adopting grace! So true is it "we love God because he first loved us." 1 John iv. 19. Behold! Paradise restored upon a foundation that cannot be destroyed. Well, therefore, might the angels sing at the birth of Messiah Jesus, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men," since such happy and such glorious effects are produced. See also, my aged reader, the perfection and pure virtue of humanity and its law exemplified in the person and character of your Redeemer, while the fulness of the Godhead dwelling in him bodily, proves him to be an almighty glorious Saviour, worthy of your highest confidence, adoration, and praise.

I presume it will be gratifying to the reader to see how these restored principles operated upon those who professed them in the days of the apostles, by forming a spiritual union with each other for the purposes of worshipping God, obeying the commandments of Jesus Christ, and enjoying their social happiness. Those societies in the New Testament were called, "The house of the living God; the

churches of Jesus Christ ;” and also the “household of faith ;” for they were distinct from worldly societies, knew each other, were united in the bonds of the Gospel, and it is therefore said, that “the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul.” Acts iv. 32. You need not be informed that the Church of Christ, from the Christian era, has continued through successive ages, and increased upon earth to the present day, and that the knowledge we have of each other as “new creatures in Christ Jesus,” excites our social principle to unite in love for purposes of glorifying God, enjoying the blessings of the Saviour, and of promoting our mutual happiness, in the hope of its consummation in the church triumphant in glory.

This short sketch of the natural and moral state of man in his original formation, together with his redemption and restoration by Jesus Christ, so far from being foreign to the subject of our immediate inquiry, whether the saints of God shall personally know each other in heaven, leads us to discover the very foundation on which such a persuasion rests, and at the same time will form a necessary aid, the better to understand other parts of Scripture where the subject is introduced. If with attention you review what has been advanced, it is presumed you will be disposed to draw a few conclusions similar to the following.

The knowledge and social faculties with which God endowed man, however obscured and vitiated

by sin, have still existed, and form the bond of every kind of society in the world; but had they been destroyed, man would have lost the essential qualities of his nature, and lived in solitude and wild degeneracy, exceeding that of the savage race. Neither should we have heard from a Cato, or from his cotemporary heathen philosophers, or from any other human being, the shadow of an idea of a future state of existence. Contrary, however, to such a wretched state, man continued a social being, which forms a part of his happiness on earth; as such he lives and as such he dies, still looking forward for better society in the world which is to come. This, therefore, forms a natural argument in favor of knowing each other in futurity, and is inseparable from our nature.

Take another view of what has been written, and it will be perceived that the knowledge of man is seated in the *mind*; the social principle is resident in the *heart*; the immutable "law of God" being ordained to direct and govern both, at the same time revealing the immortality of the soul. All these are so combined as to constitute the existence of man as a rational, accountable being to his Creator; nor can one part be taken from the other without destroying the whole. We are assured in the ninth chapter of Ecclesiastes and tenth verse, that "there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest." The reason is evident; the lifeless body is bereft of all its intellectual parts, which have returned to God who gave them. And

shall the mind, heart, and soul, become inactive or extinct in futurity, so that no knowledge nor wisdom be retained? The immortality of the soul forbids it; and Paul tells us, "Then shall I know, even also as I am known." So far, therefore, from the intellectual powers of man being inactive or destroyed in a future state, they will continue in stronger activity, having dropped their cumbrous clay; and as they formed society on earth, so they will exist in society above, and the knowledge of each other far exceed what they possessed below; and this may be applied to departed spirits, whether they be saints in heaven, or to the company of the wicked in the regions of misery.

To these reflections we may add the consideration of God having, from the ruins of the fall of man, raised up a church by Jesus Christ, to be an habitation for himself through the Spirit. Ephesians ii. 22. The individuals of this sacred society have their mental and social faculties more or less refined by grace, and are taught to know and love each other as members of the same household of faith, and thus enjoy the pleasures of the communion of saints. When transmitted by death to the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, can we conceive that the family there should not know each other; that their knowledge should fail, and that the social principle of love which God had restored, should become inactive or lost, so that there will be no Paradise, no society in heaven? By indulging such

a supposition, should we not imagine the church triumphant in glory to be inferior to the church upon earth, and less congenial with man as a new creature in Christ Jesus? On the contrary, such a supposition would be highly irrational, unworthy our character as Christians, and dishonorable to God, who giveth grace and glory.

At his pleasure the reader may now rest, indulge his own reflections, and form his own opinions. Whatever else may be found in the Scriptures upon this subject is, I presume, predicated upon what has already been examined, and may be called comments or illustrations of the whole. We will therefore proceed to introduce some of the principal passages, which sustain one view of this interesting subject.

## THE SECOND PART.

The first I shall name, is the sentiment of David on the death of his infant child, recorded in the twelfth chapter of the second book of Samuel. "The king said to his servants, Now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me." Could David only mean that he also should die, go down to the grave, or be laid along side the bones of his infant in the sepulchre of the kings? This could not have assuaged his grief, and the consolation would have been as cold as the grave. On the contrary, he

believed in a future state of existence, when he should meet and know his child, to part with him no more! Strong consolation this to every pious parent bereaved of infant children.

The address of Jesus to the unbelieving Jews, on the knowledge of each other in a future state, will also afford us some degree of information. "Many," said he to them, "shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven: But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Matthew viii. 11, 12. The Evangelist Luke has recorded the same address, "Ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out." Luke xiii. 28, &c. These are remarkable passages; and although some able writers have considered the one in Matthew to have a bearing in favor of believing Gentiles, who at different periods shall be brought into the Gospel kingdom, yet all such writers eventually refer both texts to a future state, for the being "cast out into outer darkness," &c. is only used to denote future misery. These addresses are very solemn and pointed, and are weighty in the scale of our inquiry. For if they "shall see," that is, know Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in heaven, whom they had never seen before, while they themselves were shut out; and if those ancient worthies be set down together, and are of course known to each other, may

we not reasonably conclude, that others shall share in the same mutual knowledge? To the same import and with the same design, our Saviour describes the rich man in torments, and Lazarus in the bosom of Abraham. And as Cowper says, "If a soul that has perished shall know one that is saved, surely the heirs of salvation shall know, and recollect each other in heaven." This too is a solemn thought for the wicked, who shall as certainly know their companions in future misery!

The account which Matthew, Mark, and Luke, have recorded of our Lord's transfiguration upon the mountain, will assist our inquiries. This august event no doubt was preparatory to his agony in the garden, and his death upon the cross, to give a specimen of his final glory in heaven, and likewise to make a representation of what shall be the lustre and glory of his saints in the world of spirits. On this occasion Jesus was accompanied by two of the most eminent saints of the Old Testament. Moses, the giver of the law, who had died fifteen hundred years before, and whose body had been secretly buried by the Lord. Elias, or Elijah, the prophet, who nine hundred years before had been translated, body and soul, into heaven. Both these appeared with Jesus in a glorious form; and although they could not have seen each other upon earth, yet now they know each other upon the mountain of transfiguration, and both talked with Jesus on the subject of his death, which was speedily to be accomplished



at Jerusalem. If these two glorified men knew and conversed together with Jesus on Mount Tabor, we cannot reasonably suppose that they are now ignorant of each other, and are silent in heaven. Besides Peter, James, and John, who were present on the occasion, knew them not by any likeness which they had seen of them, for no images, pictures, or likenesses in any form, were allowed by the Jews; but, from their conversation with Jesus and with each other. Will not this also strengthen our expectation, that personal knowledge of each other will make a part of the felicity of heaven?

The comparison which our Lord makes between the angels and the glorified spirits of men, next requires our consideration. On the Sadducees asking the Saviour a question on the subject of marriage in the other world, he assured them, that there "they neither marry, nor are given in marriage: neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels." Luke xx. 35, 36. All corporeal passions will of course be extinct; no natural or carnal relationship subsist; neither will there be need of any, nor of any increase in that fixed heavenly state, for "they are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection," all numbered according to "the Lamb's book of life." In the fifteenth chapter of Luke, our Lord further describes this subject in relation to the conversion of sinners. "I say unto you, That joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth. God, our Father, who is in heaven, will

no doubt rejoice to see the conversion of a sinner, being the fruit of his love, and the efficacy of the Spirit of his grace upon the soul of man. Christ will then see the travail of his soul, and be satisfied. No mention is made of the angels in this verse, but, as in heaven dwell multitudes of the spirits of the just, shall they not participate in the joy? It was by grace the sinner repented on earth, and by grace the saints are glorified in heaven; they make but one family, and mutually partake of its triumphs. May we not therefore conclude, if the saints in glory shall be "equal to the angels," who certainly must know each other, and rejoice in heaven on the conversion of a sinner, will not the spirits of the just likewise personally know each other? If not, they cannot be "equal" with angels, and the comparison of our Lord must fail.

We will now examine two or three passages in the writings of St. Paul, which may give us further information. In the third chapter of his Epistle to the Philippians he describes the quality of the bodies of the righteous on the morning of the resurrection. "Our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ; who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body." Our bodies, in the present state, are vile indeed, and produce a baneful effect upon the powers and faculties of the mind and heart, creating the greater part of our sorrow. How cheering is the assurance that the same gracious

Saviour, who redeemed the soul by his atoning blood, shall so change the depraved body, as to fashion it like unto his own glorious body! then sin shall be felt no more, and an eternity of felicity succeed! I presume that St. Paul, in this text, refers to the body of Christ glorified on his resurrection, and in which he ascended into heaven. In this body Jesus abode forty days on earth, was made known to his disciples, conversed with them and they with him, and expressed to them the sincerity of his affection. As in that glorious body Jesus possessed all the powers and faculties of our nature in the highest possible perfection; and the bodies of his saints are eventually to be fashioned "like unto his own;" it must necessarily follow that all the powers and faculties of the mind and heart will possess a corresponding state of excellence. In this present vile body we know converse with, and love one another, and enjoy the society of each other, whether naturally or morally, which things form a material part of our imperfect happiness upon earth. When, therefore, through mercy, we shall exchange a vile body for that which is glorious, can we suppose that the mental and social faculties will either be obscured or lost, so that we shall have no knowledge or recollection of each other in heaven? Or shall they not, in a glorious body, be in the highest degree refined, so that we shall know, remember, and love the saints in heaven infinitely more than we ever did on earth?

In the church of the Thessalonians death had

made considerable ravages, and removed some of their valuable friends to the grave, and left the survivors in extreme sorrow. St. Paul was not only a faithful servant of the Lord Jesus, but a man of sympathy, possessing the finest feelings which dictated tenderness and compassion to the afflicted. To instruct and console the Thessalonians under their severe bereavement, he thus addressed them, "I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." 1 Thessalonians iv. 13, 14. Suppose, in addition to this, he had said, "Your departed friends have left you in sorrow; they are safe; they sleep in Jesus; and God, at the last day, will awake and bring them with him; but you will not personally know them any more, and by them you will be eternally forgotten." Would not such an address have been more likely to increase the gloom of their melancholy than to remove their sorrow? On the contrary, must we not be disposed to believe, as a very natural conclusion from the text, that it was the apostle's intention to alleviate their sorrow, by cherishing the hope, that as their friends had left them, and now safely sleep in Jesus, so when God should bring them with him, they would meet and embrace each other again in the bonds of eternal friendship, to part no more.

We cannot omit a reflection or two upon St.

Paul's expectation of enjoying the fruits of his ministry among the converts at Thessalonica, when he should be transmitted to a future state. "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing?" said he. "Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and joy." Could St. Paul or his brethren in the ministry have anticipated such joy in the future presence of the Lord Jesus, without the impression that then and there they certainly should know the very individuals whom God called and blessed under their ministry? What sort of *crowns* would they have been to St. Paul, which could neither be seen or distinguished? It is worthy of remark, that when St. Paul wrote this Epistle, through the iron hands of persecution, he had been separated from his Thessalonian friends. He therefore addresses them thus, "But we, brethren, being taken from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavored the more abundantly to see your face with great desire." Chap. ii. 17. If by a short separation his heart was anxiously desirous of seeing them again for the increase of his joy; and should he, or should he not, have that pleasure on earth, still he looked forward to the coming of the Lord Jesus, when they should be unto him a crown of rejoicing. How delightful it is when absent friends meet in this vale of tears! it gives a fresh spring to the finer feelings of the soul; and surely when death shall separate us from each other, may we not devoutly wish and pray, that we may meet again at

the coming of the Lord Jesus, when friendship shall be crowned with joy? I may venture to say that St. Paul's expectation was not singular, the same hope, more or less, pervades the breast of every faithful minister of Christ in every age; and however discouraging his labor may be on earth, if successful but to *one* soul, the prospect of meeting that *individual* in heaven forms the strongest encouragement to perseverance.

If any man was capable of describing the nature and pleasures of a future state, it certainly must have been St. Paul, for he was not only caught up to the third heavens, but was richly endowed with the "Spirit of God," and the "mind of Christ." For the abundant grace bestowed upon his brethren at Colosse, he exhorted them to cultivate the warmest expressions of gratitude, "giving thanks unto the Father, who made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." Colossians i. 12. The apostle describes the glory of that inheritance by a single word, and calls it "light," because it is most adapted to our senses to conceive of the heavenly world, and is likewise the well known emblem of knowledge, purity, and joy, and the perfection of happiness. We know that light is the necessary medium by which we see, and have interest and communion with objects and things around us, and which afford either pleasure or pain. We learn that in this celestial state "there is no need of the light of the sun, or of the moon, nor of the candle;" natural

and artificial light will be equally unnecessary, "for God and the Lamb will be the light thereof;" all the perfections of Jehovah in the redemption of man, will then appear in their fullest harmony and glory! Those more deep and sublime parts of the Scriptures, which are "hard to be understood," and on which so many perplexing opinions have been formed, will in this world of light unfold their harmony and brilliancy, so that every saint will see eye to eye; for "when that which is perfect is come, then that which is imperfect shall be done away." 1 Corinthians xiii. 19. So likewise all the seemingly dark and mysterious dispensations of Providence which attended individuals or the church of God, will discover themselves in this inheritance of light, to have been formed as in one straight line, without a single curve; so that with one voice the glorified saints will exclaim, "Just and true are thy ways thou King of saints." Those who had been companions in suffering, and others who had laid down their lives together for the truth and honor of Christ, will there see "the end of their faith," and receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. It is certainly worthy of attention, that St. Paul not only describes the inheritance as "light," but "the saints in light." The purity of their persons, without spot or blemish; the perfection of their knowledge without a veil, and the pleasures they enjoy at God's right hand for evermore, are all in the highest degree of infinite perfection.

"The soul from sin for ever free,  
Shall mourn its power no more,  
But cloth'd in spotless purity,  
Redeeming love adore."

While we have this interesting description of the saints possessing their glorious inheritance above, amid the full blaze of celestial light, in which every object will be perceived, suited to a state of consummate happiness, can we at the same time be at liberty to suppose that the saints themselves will be so imperfect in the light of knowledge, as to be personally ignorant of each other? While this would induce us to call in question the propriety of St. Paul, in the choice of "light" as an emblem to describe the purity, knowledge, and joy, of a future state, would it not also throw a shade upon the perfection of heaven and its ineffable brightness? It has already been stated, that the saints of God on earth are made "light in the Lord," and a material part of their social happiness arises from the personal knowledge which they have of each other; and can we suppose that the pleasure of this knowledge will cease in heaven? Some of the righteous, now in glory, while on earth suffered together for the name and truth of God; while others were chained to the same stake, prayed and sang together, while the same flame of fire consumed their bodies, and dismissed their spirits to immortality; now can we indulge an impression that God will withhold from them the personal knowledge and recollection of



each other in the inheritance of light, so that they shall not again know their once fellow sufferer? Nothing but the grace and goodness of God united these worthy sufferers so strongly together in the bonds of Christian love, and upheld them under their agonies until they sunk in death; and shall the Lord's goodness be less to them in heaven, so that they will forget their cruel torments and their companions together? If so, will not likewise a material part of their praise to God for his goodness to each other, be also forgotten? To indulge such a supposition, I presume would be a reflection upon the ineffable goodness of God, and so contradictory to that inheritance of light and blessedness, which he hath promised for his saints, that the thought cannot be indulged.

To the sentiments of St. Paul, let us add the corroborating testimony of St. John, when he directed the eye of his faith to a future state of happiness. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." 1 John iii. 2. As if he had said, "Though now in a mixed state of imperfection, and the world knoweth us not, yet even 'now are we the sons of God.' This is our grand chartered privilege by grace in Christ Jesus, and which entitles us to immortality and eternal life. But 'it doth not yet' fully 'appear what we shall be' in that celestial state; the powers of the mind, and the medium of

faith, are now too faint and inferior fully to realize the glory and felicity of eternity. Still if we know little else, of this we are certain, 'that when he,' the Son of God, 'shall appear,' we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." This was the hope and the prospect of John and the saints in his day, and is equally the privilege of every child of grace in every age. And shall the sons of God see Jesus "as he is?" Triumphant prospect! Shall "they be like him" in his illustrious image of light, holiness, and love? This will be the consummation of their felicity. Will Jesus then personally know his saints in glory? We cannot deny it. Then we shall personally know them too, or as St. Paul says, "Then shall I know, even also as I am known."

In the former part of this essay, the reader will recollect it is asserted, that the expectation of personally knowing each other in a future state appears to be a natural impression, formed universally upon the mind of man; nor shall I be wrong if I call it the dictate of nature. As a confirmation of this, and as affording no small illustration of all I have written upon this subject, let us appeal to the last hours of departing Christians passing from this vale of tears, and looking forward with an anxious desire to be with Christ. They indulge a lively impression, that in the world of spirits they shall join those beloved friends who had either gone before or might follow them, and there spend an eternity in mutual love and praise, never again to be interrupted. Go then, visit

such death beds; or bring to recollection those you have already attended, and you will speedily be convinced that, probably, not one of a hundred favored with the exercise of reason, and enjoying any consolation in the Lord, but who, more or less, anticipated the pleasure of personally knowing the saints in heaven; and this I will call the dictate of nature and grace combined. In addition to this, let me recommend to you that whenever you take in hand to read a volume of biographical history of God's departed worthies, carefully to observe their last recorded expressions, and you will find, more or less, their lively expectation of knowing and being known by the society in heaven. Luther, Owen, Baxter, Cowper, Harvey, Doddridge, and numberless others, both ancient and modern, eminent for piety, indulged this divine persuasion at their latter end. Copious extracts from their writings, to prove this, might here be introduced were it necessary. In a dying hour, such expectations yield a double source of consolation; for while they expand the desire to pass away, and to join the society in heaven, it tends to reconcile the mind to the stroke of death, and produces a cheerful readiness to bid adieu to pious connexions here below, in the hope of enjoying their society again in eternity. Here then we meet the natural impression, which so far from its being obliterated in the minds of righteous men, the grace of God strengthens and expands the same, in the prospect of enjoying the society in Paradise above.

Shall we then indulge the supposition, that God will disappoint an expectation so universal and rational in itself, so strongly entwined in the hope of his children, and at the same time so worthy of himself?

Let the reader now bring forward the first part of this essay, and compare it with the second; he will then perceive that the knowledge and social principle with which man was originally created, however since depraved by sin, so far from being destroyed, still exists, and has dictated the formation of every description of society in the world; for if destroyed, man would have lost his being. He will then perceive the glory of God's grace by Jesus Christ, in restoring those principles in the souls of the redeemed, so as not only to "love the Lord their God with all their heart, and their neighbour as themselves," but to form the most glorious society upon earth, the church of God. From the several Scripture passages introduced in the second part, he will easily perceive the operation of those restored principles in the souls of the primitive saints, both for their social happiness in this life, and the anticipation of their consummation in the world which is to come. The whole of these, like a golden chain, run through the dispensation of God's grace, from first to last, in bringing many sons to glory; and then he may ask himself, whether there is not sufficient ground in the Scriptures for him to believe that "the saints of God will personally know each other in heaven;" and if it be not so, whether the church

triumphant in glory, would not be inferior in social happiness to the church on earth? which God forbid the thought!

Perhaps my reader may be disposed to say, "You have examined only one side of the subject, by introducing those passages of Scripture only which, by inference, give us leave to suppose, or to hope, that we shall know one another in heaven; but you have not cited any text which may weaken the inferences, or deny them." To this I reply that in faithfulness and candor, I have sought for such passages in the Bible, but cannot find any, no, not one; and this strengthens my persuasion, that my inferences are correct. There is indeed an objection, which a few solitary persons have surmised, and which, for your sake, I will name. It is, "That if the saints in heaven shall know that some of those with whom they were affectionately united on earth, were not in that state of happiness, it would produce a diminution of joy." To this I reply, it will be no wonder that if in heaven the glorified saints should find many absent whom they expected to meet, and others there whom they never thought of seeing in that happy state; for "the Lord" alone "knoweth them that are his." Besides, as our Lord assures us, that there is "neither marrying nor given in marriage in heaven," it certainly is designed to assure us that all natural relationship and sensual dispositions will there have no existence. It is impossible that such appetites should be possessed after death; for although

our flesh be sown in the grave a "natural body," it shall "be raised a spiritual body;" perfectly free from the dispositions and appetites we now possess, and as perfectly suited to a spiritual state of enjoyment. The objection, therefore, destroys itself, for if disappointment or regret, or any cause of diminution of joy be felt in heaven, it could not be a state of perfect felicity. So far from any thing of this kind, the blessedness of the righteous will flow from their relationship to Christ; and whatever may be the final state of their former relatives, the whole will be resolved into the holy and sovereign will of God.\*

I would make an apology to my reader for extending this essay to so great a length, did I not indulge an impression that the subject is peculiarly interesting; especially to a pious aged person about to leave his friends on earth, and pass away to the scenes of eternity. You may, therefore, reflect upon what has been stated on the social principles; examine each text singly, and then take the whole together, weigh the evidence, and in the fear of God form your own conclusion. Certain I am, that a persuasion that we shall know each other in heaven, and there spend an eternity in holy love and friendship, will produce a cheerful and becoming effect upon our

\*The reader is earnestly requested to read an admirable work on this subject, by Bishop Mant, entitled, "The Happiness of the Blessed," an edition of which has been issued by the publishers of this volume.

tempers and conduct towards each other while here,  
and reconcile us to part in death with those we most  
tenderly love, while we rejoice in hope, that

Far, far beyond these mortal shores,  
A bright inheritance is ours :  
Where saints in light our coming wait,  
To share their holy blissful state.  
If ready drest for heav'n we shine,  
Thine are the robes, the crown is thine :  
May endless years their course prolong,  
While *thine the praise*, is all our song.

DODDRIDGE.





## A WALK TO THE VILLAGE OF EMMAUS.

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O lead me to that happy path,  
Where I my Lord may meet;  
Tho' hosts of foes begird it round,  
Tho' briars wound my feet.

Cheer'd with thy converse, I can trace  
The desert with delight;  
Thro' all the gloom one smile of thine  
Can dissipate the night.

EMMAUS was a small village about seven and a half miles north of Jerusalem. It is said to have been once very populous, but was burnt after the death of Herod the great, by Varus, the Roman governor. Here were fountains and hot baths, supposed to possess medicinal virtues. Josephus informs us, that Vespasian, after the seige of Jerusalem, left eight hundred soldiers in Judea, to whom he gave this village. Its chief celebrity in Scripture is attributed to its being the place to which two of our Saviour's disciples walked on the day of his resurrection, which is admirably recorded in the last chapter of St. Luke. The narrative contains such instructive information,

that I cannot forbear drawing from it a few lessons, which may be adapted to the feelings and desires of aged Christians. The travellers were two, the name of one only being mentioned. This is Cleophas. He is said to be the brother of Joseph, the reputed father of Jesus, likewise it is said, that he was the husband of Mary, the sister of the blessed Virgin, the father of Simon, James the Less, of Jude and Joses. The name of the other disciple is not recorded, but is supposed to have been Luke himself; as probably, like John, on certain occasions, he modestly concealed his own name. On the first day of the week, as our Lord arose early in the morning, these two men were walking in company to the village of Emmaus; whether on business, to see their friends, or to avoid the clamor of the enemies of Jesus, is not certain. However, as it is said, that in after times a church was built on the very spot where the house of Cleophas had stood in this village, I readily conclude that he and his companion were now walking home to his own dwelling.

While on the road, the conversation of these two men turned upon the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, which they expected, according to his own prediction, would have happened this very day, thereby to prove the reality of his character as the Son of God. And notwithstanding what Peter, John, and the women had said, that they early in the morning visited the sepulchre, found the stone rolled away, and the body gone; yet these men were slow

of heart to believe the certainty of the fact. At this time Jesus, in the character of a stranger joined their company, and interrogated them on the subject of their conversation, which appeared to occasion such dejection of mind. They told him of the things which had taken place in Jerusalem concerning Jesus of Nazareth; at the same time expressing their surprise that he should be unacquainted with them. To show their own interest in it, they said unto him, "But we trusted that it had been he that should have redeemed Israel; and besides all this, to-day is the third day since these things were done." What an instance is this of the unbelief and impatience of the best of men, to wait for God's time to fulfil his own promise and confer his favors! This was indeed on the third day. It must have been in the afternoon, and surely they might have exercised their patience until the day had been ended. Jesus, the supposed stranger, takes up the subject, and beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, he expounded to them that Messiah was to suffer death, rise again, and thus to enter into his glory; and this, they afterwards confessed, produced peculiar emotions in their heart! The conversation continued until they drew nigh unto the village, and the shadows of the evening now began to cover them. Jesus still supporting the character of a stranger, with very great propriety made as though he would pursue his journey; but the two men having already enjoyed so much satisfaction from his company, from prin-

ciples of kindness and hospitality, gave him a pressing invitation to abide with them for the night, no doubt expecting to derive still greater benefit from his conversation. Jesus accepted the invitation; and being prepared, he took his seat at the table. In his usual expressive manner, "he took break and blessed it, and gave it unto them." Immediately their eyes were opened, and they knew their Lord! But Jesus, amidst their surprise, vanished away. The two disciples, after reciting to each other the warmth of their hearts, while enjoying the benefits of his instruction by the way, and opening their understanding on those Scriptures which speak of the sufferings, death, resurrection, and future glory of the Messiah; arose the very same hour, and returned to Jerusalem. Finding the eleven disciples convened together, these two men told them what things had happened in their walk to Emmaus, and how the Lord was made known to them in breaking of bread; all which excited expressions of great joy.

I call this a peculiarly interesting chapter, for out of it may be drawn the most valuable information to prove the resurrection of Christ; the connexion between the Old and the New Testaments; the manner of the ascension of Jesus to heaven; with many other important subjects, which cannot fail to establish your faith, increase your joy, and encourage your hope of a glorious immortality; and certainly it cannot be read too often by a Christian, whether young or aged.

We need no conviction that the actual scenes recited in this chapter, in the nature of things, cannot now literally be repeated; we can no more know Jesus after the flesh, or expect his bodily visible presence: "for the heavens have received him until the time of restitution of all things." His promised spiritual presence, however, is of far greater advantage, which he realizes to us by his blessed Spirit, through the medium of his glorious Gospel. Let us, therefore, in the use of this chapter, attempt to take, what I may call, a believing walk with Jesus to Emmaus, and may his divine Spirit instruct and animate our hearts by the way.

1. Suppose, in the character of the two disciples travelling to Emmaus, we see represented two aged Christians, who, having travelled through life in the paths of godliness, are now drawing to its evening shade, earnestly entreating the Saviour to abide with them the remainder of their earthly existence, until they pass the night of death. For frequently this is the pleasing intimacy between Christians, and sometimes with ministers, who, in early life, have formed the Gospel bond of friendship, which has strengthened on their journey, and become more consolidated and interesting as their day declines. They perceive the shades of evening advance, the animal nature fails by length of their journey; and while the active scenes of their day decline, nothing is so dear to such pilgrims on earth, as spiritual communion with their

Lord and Master. Or suppose we change the characters and say, Here are a couple, MAN and WIFE, who knowing and fearing the Lord, have lived long together, in the various relations of domestic life; enjoyed the instructions of Jesus by the way, and have proved mutual helpers of each other, and now the shadows of evening fall upon them. Perhaps this may be the case with my present reader. What now can satisfy and refresh such an aged couple, more than the consoling and supporting company of the Lord Jesus while drawing near to the grave. Ye aged, married pair, tell me if this be not the supreme wish of your hearts? But let me not forget to reduce this even to a solitary case, whether of male or female: for it is possible you have lost your earthly friends, and as a solitary traveller, you have nearly reached your journey's end, anticipating the night of death. Like the disciples going to Emmaus, you have frequently enjoyed the presence of your Saviour, and he made your heart burn with devotion, while he talked with you by the way. Many may have been your private and public exertions for the honor of your Lord, and the afflicted around you, but now "the night cometh, when no man can work." The failure of memory, languor of spirit, and the decay of animal strength, these, with many other appendages to old age, add a powerful excitement to your faith and desire to close the mortal scene in more happy converse with your risen and everlasting Saviour. For you can say with David, "Whom have I in

heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth I desire beside thee."

I will avail myself of the figurative parts of this narrative to describe to you the scene of the declining life of man. "It is towards evening, and the day is far spent," the sun is going down, and the sable curtain of life will soon drop. An impression of this upon the mind, will produce those sensations which I cannot fully describe, and create a thousand serious reflections, which are unfelt in the meridian of day! A day, from morning to evening, may comprehend the whole life of man; and to a Christian, one who is born again of the Spirit into a new and spiritual life, it may be properly called, a day of grace, and the visitation of the Lord. Such a day may be attended with great variations, whether of pleasure or pain, duty or trial; and to some such pilgrims on the road, a larger share of storm and tempest may be allotted than to others, which, while it creates reflection and astonishment at the merciful preservation received, fails not to make the end of the journey the more desirable. A person who has been active in the religious world, whether by serving the Lord in preaching the Gospel, or in more private life having employed his time in going about doing good to his fellow creatures, by acts of kindness and charity, eventually finds his day far spent. His pious, benevolent disposition still continues, and he is not unfrequently induced to indulge an impression, that his natural day of hours and minutes grows shorter,

which, in reality, is impossible. On examining the reason for this supposition, it will be found to arise from a relaxation of the powers of the mind and body, which will not admit of former exertions, though an anxious desire to do good is still retained in the generous bosom, and therefore the labor is diminished. This is somewhat like St. Paul's complaint of the body of sin, and may easily be applied to the last stages of man. "When I would do good, evil," the evil of old age as well as of sin, "is present with me; and how to perform that which is good I find not." In what a strong light, and how impressive does this debilitated state of man enforce upon us the example of Christ! "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day, the night cometh, when no man can work." JOHN ix. 4. However, like the two disciples going to Emmaus, it has been, and still is, the privilege of every pious person, more or less, to spend his day by walking in company with Jesus. By this you also were animated to pursue your journey; your doubts and fears, like those of the disciples, were removed; the roughness of the road has been made smoother, and the time has passed away with greater rapidity and pleasure. Forget not that as sure as the rising sun ushers in the brightness of the morning, and again sets to our hemisphere, and forms the night, so sure will the longest day of man terminate in the night of death. Let us now look at the other reason assigned by the two disciples, to induce Jesus to abide with them for the night.



II. "It is towards evening." The sun is now retiring from the travellers, and gives leave to a star to sparkle in the sky; at any rate, to give them assurance that although the shades of night must necessarily cover them, another morning shall certainly succeed. So the evening star of promise will salute the eye of faith; and in anticipation of the night of death, will aid the lips of an aged disciple thus to speak the triumph of hope on a resurrection morning. "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness." The evening air, once affording the most delightful sensations in youth and manhood, becomes chilling and unsupportable to the infirmities incident to age. Though in earlier life we were well able to bear the heat, the burden, or the storm of the day, now at the close of its journey, such are the fatigue, the lassitude, and exhaustion of the weary traveller, that the evening air of affliction, however gentle the breeze, overpowers the animal spirits, and calls aloud for that strength and animation which nothing but the company of a risen Saviour can produce. In proportion as the shades of evening increase, the objects with which the traveller was conversant in the brightness of the day, begin gradually to retire from the sight, and all their variety and beauty are speedily covered with a veil, and remain to him as a blank, or as though they never had existed. It is even so in the evening of life. The powers of memory fail, the natural enjoyments of life at once lose their

beauty and their relish ; and now the good man is admonished that he must soon be undressed of his apparel of mortality, and be stretched upon the bed of death. No wonder that at such a fading time as this, his only wish should be for the company and the smiles of his Redeemer !

III. Let us now return to the two disciples who had arrived at Emmaus. We are informed that Jesus made as though he would have gone further, but they constrained him, saying, "Abide with us." Will you not copy their example ? At the close of your day, when flesh and heart fail, who, or what can afford you adequate consolation, support, and joy, but the sensible spiritual presence of your kind and gracious Lord ? Those two disciples constrained Jesus, used entreaties and strong arguments, supposing him to have been a mere traveller, and in danger of being overtaken by the darkness and danger of the night. What they knew not then concerning his real person, they knew afterwards, at his breaking of bread ; but you are no stranger to his person. It is Jesus the Son of God, crucified, risen, ascended, exalted in glory and honor for you. He is the very Saviour who has granted you mercy, conducted your feet into the way of peace, preserved and continued you thus far on your journey, and he is that blessed one who alone can refresh you in your evening state. Now do you not feel an ardent desire, by fervent prayer, to constrain this heavenly Friend to make

his abode with you in your last stage of life ? If those disciples addressed Jesus as a supposed stranger, certainly he is now no stranger to you ; he has expressed his kindness and favors to you at times and in ways so abundant, which give strength to your importunity to make his abode with you the short time you have yet to dwell in your earthly tabernacle. If the word *constrained* had not been found in the text, I should have hesitated in naming it, for the Lord delighteth to dwell with those who love him. But as it is expressive of their anxiety for his company, having made their heart burn within them, while he talked with them by the way, surely you may recollect some such delightful seasons on the journey of your life, while walking with your Lord. From this impression, derived from your increasing infirmities of body, the unavoidable failure of mind, the close of the day, the evening shade, the near approach of the night of death, do you not feel your need of help, do you not fervently pray for support, do you not even *constrain* the blessed Saviour with all the strength of faith and fervor of desire, that he may abide with you ? If he does not, who, or what can supply his absence ? Therefore,

IV. Let us mark the condescending conduct of Jesus to the disciples at Emmaus. "He went in to tarry with them," and so he will do with you. It cannot possibly be uninteresting to observe the peculiar conduct of Christ, while tarrying in the

house; and possibly from thence you also may derive a few lessons of instruction. The sun set, the family in order, and the supper prepared, Jesus and the company sat down to meat. Unexpectedly, the supposed stranger took the master's seat. According to his usual custom, and particularly as he did at the last passover, "he took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them." The attitude, the voice, the benediction, with the attending circumstances, made a very forcible impression upon the minds of the two disciples. It is said, "Their eyes were opened, and they knew him: and he vanished out of their sight;" having now answered all the design of his entering into the house, and giving them testimony that he was their risen Lord. From this memorable occurrence, I said, you who are his disciples indeed, may learn some useful lessons on the close of your day. Do you entreat the beloved Son of God to be your present companion, consolation, and joy? Then he will abide with you, open your understanding, feed you with the bread of life, nourish, strengthen, and animate your spirits, so that, like those two disciples, you will not only say to others, Did not our heart burn within us while he talked with us by the way; but likewise that the Lord is risen indeed, and he is our joy in the evening of life, in the darkness of death, and hope for the bright morning of the resurrection to a glorious immortality? In seeking and pleading for such sacred visits, be not discouraged, for the Saviour hath said, "If a

man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." John xiv. 23. Further to encourage and assure you of his free and gracious disposition to abide with you in the evening of life, he even demands your attention: "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." Revelation iii. 20.

No farther go to-night, but stay,  
Dear Saviour, 'till the break of day:

Turn in my Lord with me,  
And in the morning, when I wake,  
Then in thy arms, dear Jesus, take,  
And I will go with thee.

Now Lord, be with us on our way; .  
Unveil thy face, thine arm display,

Thy glory let us prove:  
Do thou, blest Saviour, with us walk,  
That while with thee we sweetly talk,  
Our hearts may burn with love.

May we in faith still journey on,  
'Till we arrive where thou art gone,  
And see thy face in heav'n;  
Then, when in glory we shall meet,  
In what sweet concert shall we sit,  
And sing of sins forgiven.

CENNICK.



## THE TEARS OF JESUS.

---

What solemn sight is this appears ?  
The *Son of God* bedew'd with tears !  
Trace, O my soul with sad surprise,  
The sorrows of thy Saviour's eyes ;  
For whom, blest Jesus, I would know,  
Doth such a sacred torrent flow ?  
No brother there, nor friend I see,  
But sons of pride and cruelty.

DODDRIDGE, ALTERED.

**THE** Messiah of God, who in the fulness of time was to come into the world, was predicted by Isaiah, as "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." The reason for which is assigned by the same prophet, "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed." We believe that we have found the Messiah in the person of Jesus, the Son of God, whose whole life was a continued scene of pain, sorrow, and distress, terminating in his death upon the cross; and according to the same prophet, by "his soul being made an offering for sin." Isaiah liii. These

acts of Christ form the hope of the guilty, and no subject equal to this is more strongly interwoven in the texture of every believing heart. The history and virtue of the sorrows of Jesus form the sources from whence alone sacred joy flows into the heart of man ; and for these reasons I purpose to indulge a few considerations on the TEARS OF JESUS, at the same time sincerely wishing this subject may afford instruction and consolation to the aged Christian ; aiding him to moralize on his own tears by meditating on those of his Saviour.

It is not improper that we should devoutly make an attempt to ascertain the QUALITY of the tears of Jesus, and this will naturally aid us to meditate on two well known occasions when Jesus wept.

Human tears, flowing from the eyes, are formed from that peculiar limpid fluid secreted by the lachrymal glands. This fluid is naturally designed to preserve the transparency of the cornea, by keeping it moist, and removing from it foreign substances. In man a preternatural flow of tears is excited by different passions of the mind, especially by grief. The human tear has been examined chemically, for the purposes of ascertaining its constituent parts, and its specific gravity, the result of which it is unnecessary here to recite, for our inquiry is of a different kind, and directed to moral purposes. If the philosopher may derive advantage by analyzing the natural tear, so when we reflect on the dignity of Christ's person, and the peculiar nature of his sufferings, we



are disposed, by the use of the Scriptures, to inquire into the nature and quality of the tears which he shed.

I. Fear is peculiar to human beings, and is the result of our transgressions, arising from the pollution of our nature, and our exposure to misery, else we could no more have wept than could Adam in his innocency when placed in the garden of Eden. In Christ, the second Adam, was no sin, for "he was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners;" therefore, the tears of Jesus were not like ours, impregnated with the brine of sin, but they evinced the purity of his humanity, which was without spot and without blemish.

II. The tears of men usually start from their eyes, occasioned by the conflict between the disordered or disappointed passions within their breast. But no such conflicts were ever produced in the bosom of Jesus. His very enemies were objects of his pity. The disobedience of Peter met with a sufficient reproof from the piercing, compassionate eye of his Lord, to compel him to retire and weep bitterly! Jesus endured the contradiction of sinners against himself; but "when he was reviled, he reviled not again;" and even upon his cross he prayed for his very murderers; but then we are not told that he shed a tear. His goodness, piety, benevolence, magnanimity, truth, and all his excellencies were in perfect unison with each other, so that his tears could not have flowed from

the weakness of his human nature, nor the conflict of passion against the rage of his enemies. His bosom was a perfect calm, his joys were grave, his grief just, and those tears which dropped from his eyes were worthy of himself.

III. The tears of Jesus were transparent drops, forming so many mirrors, in which appear his tenderness, compassion, and love, to guilty men. They were tears of pity and sincerity, and not of dissimulation or hypocrisy, like the tears of those who anciently were hired to weep for the dead. Jeremiah ix. 17, 18. Men of corrupt minds, for their personal advantage, may train their passions with such dexterity as to produce tears upon every occasion that may be likely to impose upon others. What our Saviour said to the weeping daughters of Jerusalem, when bearing his cross to Calvary, may indeed be applied to himself, "Weep not for me, but for yourselves, and for your children." Luke xxiii. 28. The tears which flowed from his eyes were a generous and sympathetic expression of his heart towards others, under the accumulation of their sufferings and misfortunes.

IV. The dignity of his person, as the Son of God, enhances the virtue and value of his tears. We dare not say that the Divinity can either suffer, weep, bleed, or die, but the combination of the two natures in one person, "the fulness of the Godhead dwelling in him bodily," must unquestionably enhance

the quality of every action he performed, and of every tear which he shed. When David was driven from Jerusalem by the rebellion of Absalom, "and went up by the ascent of Mount Olivet, and wept as he went up, and all the people went up with him," his tears must have been more highly expressive than those of others who were with him, because he was king over all Israel and Judah. 2 Samuel xv. 30. Therefore, when we see Jesus bathed in tears, as the "Son of God, the King of kings," and "Lord of lords," must we not confess, that every tear which he shed, was of a dignity not possessed by the eye of mortals. Here human sympathy and divine compassion are most delightfully combined together in the expressive tears of Jesus, the friend of sinners, and certainly they demand our highest veneration!

V. Our considerations on the tears of Jesus, as a Redeemer and Mediator between God and man, will further evince their value. St. Paul informs us in the fifth chapter of his Epistle to the Hebrews, that Christ is a "Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared." Ver. 6, 7. The design of this great High Priest coming in the flesh, was to give himself, body and soul, as a sin-offering and a ransom to the provoked justice of God for the redemption of his people. In the performance

of this great work Jesus poured forth strong cries and tears, whether in the solitary wilderness, or in the garden of Gethsemane; which impresses us with a conviction of the sorrows he endured, and the fervent devotion of his soul in supplication to his Father. The limits of this paper will not allow me to make more than one other observation upon this part of our subject. It is this, as Christ came to save his people from their sins, with all their awful consequences, our Saviour hath described them in their truest colors, particularly so as they relate to a future state of punishment, which he frequently describes as a state and place in utter darkness, "where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Luke xiii. 28. Jesus, therefore, to save his redeemed from that wrath to come, and from those bitter tears, he shed both his blood and his tears. This gives us another view of the tears of Jesus, not only expressive of his compassion, but of their value and their merit, which demands our gratitude and praise! We must conclude these remarks by saying, that the tears of Jesus were the seeds of his future glory. "For we see Jesus, who for the suffering of death, is now crowned with glory and honor." The word of God assures us, that "they that sow in tears shall reap in joy." How strikingly was this verified in Jesus, the man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief, who "for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despised the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." David expresses a similar

sentiment, and exemplifies it under the expressive similitude of the laboring husbandman. "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." Psalm cxxvi. 6. How justly was this verified in the true David, Jesus the Son of God ! He came forth from the bosom of his Father ; at the age of thirty years he assumed his public ministry, weeping for the sins and ignorance of the people, bearing the precious seed of his Gospel ; and having completed his work upon earth, he returned to the bosom of his Father in glory. In the last day Jesus will come again, bringing his sheaves with him, the souls of the redeemed, as the produce of the harvest of his grace, or, as Paul expresses it, "At the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints." 1 Thesalonians iii. 13.

Thus we have presumed, by the aid of the Scriptures, to examine the nature of the tears of Jesus ; and we are compelled to confess, that they were transparent and free from every taint of impurity, and therefore the very reverse of our own. They flowed from the love of his heart, without the agitation of passion. So transparent were they, that every drop was as a glass, in which you might behold the perfection of his character as the Son of God, and his good will to man. None but the Son of God could have shed such meritorious tears ; and eventually we shall see him return, not in tears, but with triumphant majesty, and glory beaming in his

eyes! We will now advert to the two occasions recorded in the Gospel, on which the compassionate Saviour indulged his tears.

In the town of Bethany, about two miles from Jerusalem, lived Lazarus and his two sisters, to whom Jesus made frequent visits for their instruction. "Now," it is said, "Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus;" but such expressions of the Saviour's kindness are by no means designed to secure any person from the common evils of life, nor from the stroke of death. Lazarus is taken seriously ill, and a messenger was sent to Jesus at Jerusalem, saying, "Lord, he whom thou lovest is sick." Christ delayed his visit, not for the want of affliction, but with a design to express his greater regard, and to show forth his glory. Lazarus died, and had been in his grave four days. Jesus arrived at Bethany, and after some very interesting conversation with the family, he inquires for the place of interment, and is invited to visit the grave. At this "Jesus wept;" and being accompanied by the surviving sisters and many of the Jews, he arrived at the spot. At his orders the stone which lay at the mouth of the cave was removed. Jesus lifted up his eyes and prayed to his Father, and then with a loud voice cried, "Lazarus, come forth," and instantly the dead man sprang to life!

It has with great propriety been said, that there is an expressive language in tears, for they speak as they flow. Let us, therefore, listen to the voice of those

tears which Jesus shed at the grave of Lazarus, for their language must have been divinely expressive. Certainly they give us a fine expression of his condolence, and of the sympathy of his heart for a family bereaved of an affectionate and valuable brother ; and enforce that humane admonition, "Weep with those that weep." We are at no loss to say, that they were the tears of friendship, for when the Jews beheld him weeping, they exclaimed, "Behold how he loved him !" Jesus, now standing in the midst of the grave yard, beheld the monuments of the dead, and the hillocks of the graves, his heart could not but feel for the demerit of sin, the slaughter of death, and the degradation of mortals ; all which drew tears from his eyes. Notwithstanding the great piety of the bereaved Martha, Jesus wept on hearing the expressions of her doubts, and her limiting his power to save ; for our doubts are great sins, and require the compassion and forgiveness of the Saviour. Nor can we forbear saying, that they were the tears of extreme sorrow, for it is twice said in this affecting narrative, that Jesus "groaned in himself," for not a tear did he shed that did not cost his heart a groan ! The tears of Jesus, therefore, demonstrate that he was truly man, subject to the same impressions as ourselves, yet without the alloy of sin. But the close of the scene proclaims him to be the Son of God, with power ; his tears were the harbingers of a display of his Godhead ; his accents aroused Lazarus from the sleep of death, and he once more joined the society

of his friends, and walked in the light of the living. From this display of the Saviour's compassion and power, well might many of the Jews who accompanied Mary "believe on him," and well may we rejoice in the tenderness of his heart.

The eye of Jesus wept,  
It dropt a holy tear,  
When Mary's brother slept  
A friend to Jesus dear :  
Delightful thought ! That blessed eye  
Still beams with kindness in the sky.

The other occasion on which Jesus shed tears, was on his public and last entrance into Jerusalem; the circumstances of which, St. Luke in his nineteenth chapter, has minutely recorded. Jerusalem was the ancient city, the metropolis of the Hebrew nation, the seat of its kings, and especially the place of worship to which all the tribes of Israel were enjoined to repair. To this people successive prophets had been sent in the name of the Lord, and in their temple sacrifices were offered upon the altars. But the hypocrisy of the priests, the corruption of their ordinances, their perversions of the Old Testament writings, the profligacy of their manners, and their rejection of the Messiah, brought down the displeasure of God upon them. At this time the Jews were in bondage to the Romans, and many of their civil privileges were forfeited. Jesus, according to the flesh, was of this nation, and subjected himself to the ceremonial laws



of its temple, preached to them the things of the kingdom of God, explained to them the writings of their prophets, and forewarned them of the impending awful judgments of God upon them. Jesus now riding into Jerusalem, accompanied by many of his disciples, and a large concourse of people, "when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it," and made the most pathetic exclamation on the hardness of their hearts, the loss of their privileges, and the inevitable destruction which should ensue. Thus the compassionate Jesus, as a man and a prophet, wept over this wicked city, whose destruction was inevitable. As the Messiah, he knew that through the ignorance and misrepresentation of their priests and elders, they had subverted the design of the Old Testament prophecies, and were taught to look for a temporal deliverer, instead of the "Holy One of Israel," who was to bear our iniquities, make his soul an offering for sin, and thus fulfil the purposes of God in the salvation of his people. For the hardness of their hearts *Jesus wept* over them: for by their unbelief the Jews closed the door of hope against themselves. The event verified the just cause of the Saviour's tears, for about forty years afterwards the temple was destroyed, Jerusalem was left as a plowed field, and the Jews have remained in dispersion to this day. I will venture to make one other reflection on Jesus weeping over Jerusalem. The Saviour knew that although the Jews should be scattered in wrath, yet in the fulness of time they

should be gathered in mercy. The veil shall be taken from their eyes, the Gospel shall be received, and that ancient remnant turn unto the Lord, whom their forefathers had crucified and slain. Jesus now wept, foreseeing their destruction. His tears fell on Israel's ground. May we not say that they prepare the land of Palestine to receive the good seed of his kingdom, and that eventually the Jews shall be converted, and according to the prophetic prayer, the Holy One of Israel "will establish and make Jerusalem a praise in the whole earth." Isaiah lxii. 7.

Who now but must perceive the strong contrast between the weeping Saviour and the thoughtless sinner! Jesus weeps for the guilt and miseries of man, while the careless sinner, like the hardened inhabitants of Jerusalem, sheds not one tear for his sins, nor for the danger of losing his soul. Reader, is it so with you? Let the humble penitent know that the tears which Jesus shed while upon earth, were as so many beautiful mirrors of that compassion and grace which he now possesses in heaven to save the chief of sinners. Go then, humble sinner, go to the throne of mercy, for the language of every tear, and every drop of blood is, "Look unto me, and be ye saved."—The afflicted Christian, who walks this vale of tears, should learn, by meditation, to mingle his tears with those of his Saviour's, for this will, my suffering friend, sweeten the bitterest cup of your sorrow. But you, my aged reader, who are often bowed beneath the weight of years, the infirmities

of decaying nature, and more so by the increasing debility of the mind, and the greater evils of the heart, often dropping the melancholy tear in prospect of the grave, think, O think, of the tears of your compassionate Saviour! Forget not him who wept at the grave of Lazarus, and who can amply support your depressed mind, and console your spirit, in prospect of your own. So sure as Jesus wept on earth, and is now enthroned in glory, so sure will he guide you through the vale of death, and receive your spirit in the mansions of felicity, where no tear shall again start from your eye, but where you shall see him as he is, full of love and glory, and where, with a glorified body like his own, you will sing his praises for ever and ever.

Did Christ o'er sinners weep?  
And shall our cheeks be dry?  
Let floods of penitential grief  
Burst forth from every eye.

The Son of God in tears,  
Angels with wonder see!  
Be thou astonished, O my soul!  
He shed those tears for thee.

He wept that we might weep,  
Each sin demands a tear:  
In heav'n alone no sin is found,  
And there's no weeping there.

Joy beams in every eye,  
And fills each holy heart:  
All join to sound the triumph high,  
In praise to bear their part.



## BARZILLAI AND DAVID.

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Who hopes a friend should have a heart  
Himself, well furnish'd for the part,  
And ready on occasion,  
To show the virtues that he seeks;  
For 'tis an union that bespeaks,  
A just reciprocation.

COWPER.

THERE is something in the history of an old man which seldom fails to afford lessons of instruction. Of Barzillai we have no information, except his generous attention to David when in a state of exile, which fact is recorded in the nineteenth chapter of the second book of Samuel. Driven from his throne by the usurpation and unnatural rebellion of his son Absalom, David, with a few of his friends, fled to the land of Gilead, and made a sort of encampment at Mahanaim, which happened to be the very place where, many years before, Jacob was succored by angels, at the time when he fled from the angry face of his brother Esau. Near this place, at Rogelim, lived Barzillai, who, with others of his rich neighbors, supplied David and his men with necessities for

their support; and on the event of his restoration, accompanied him over Jordan, and then returned. I purpose to make the account we have of this venerable old man the subject of a few reflections, under an impression that it may contribute to the instruction and pleasure of the reader.

I. We are informed that Barzillai was a "very great man." In worldly possessions he must have been so, or he could not have so liberally supplied the wants of David and his companions. The endowments of his mind, and the experience he had gained in so long a life, must have been very great; and whether he had sustained public offices as a magistrate or judge, the public opinion of him was that of a "very great man." His very advanced age, ten years beyond the usual age of man, with his venerable appearance, must have added much to the greatness of his character. But if his kindness to David and his men in distress be received as an expression of the general texture of his heart, we may certainly say, that he was a very great man in acts of benevolence, kindness, charity, and love to his afflicted fellow creatures. Whether by influence or not, it appears from the seventeenth chapter, that Shobi and Machir, two of his rich neighbors, mutually supplied the wants of the exiles. And as a copy of the bill of fare, if I may so call it, or list of articles with which they supplied the people, is recorded in the two last verses, with the reason which excited

their kindness, I will transcribe it. They "brought beds, and basons, and earthen vessels, and wheat, and barley, and flour, and parched corn, and beans, and lentiles, and parched pulse, and honey, and butter, and sheep, and cheese of kine, for David, and for the people that were with him, to eat: for they said, The people is hungry, and weary, and thirsty, in the wilderness." How good and honorable it is, when persons of opulence and age in a neighborhood are equally possessed of benevolence, to relieve the wants of the needy! But after all, may we not say, that old Barzillai was great in the fear of the Lord? for this alone, according to the language of Scripture, constitutes a great man; nor do we ever apply it to a bad man, whatever may be his situation in society. The whole of his conduct to David and his afflicted people was strongly marked with all that seriousness, solidity of judgment, and kindness of heart, which could be the effect of nothing else than the fear and reverence of the God of Israel; and certainly this forms the just character of every great and good old man, find him where you may.

II. The conduct of Barzillai to David, when God, by his providence, called him back again to possess his throne in Jerusalem, is peculiarly honorable to his character. Absalom, while pursuing his father, was put to death, his army routed, and David is welcomed to return to Jerusalem. Old Barzillai partook of the joy, and offered to accompany the king over

Jordan. This was certainly an expression of his attachment to David, and his wish to pay him the greatest, as well as the last expression of his friendship, notwithstanding the greatness of his age, and the natural infirmities which he may have had; and surely he is justly entitled to our admiration for the noble and generous spirit which he possessed. "And the king said unto Barzillai, Come thou over with me, and I will feed thee with me in Jerusalem." This is a fine expression of David's grateful heart, for the favors he had received from this good old friend. Barzillai had fed him in the wilderness, and in return David invites him to partake of the hospitalities of his court. By the hand of Barzillai he had been refreshed in his gloomy exile; now he invites him to Jerusalem, to share in the triumph on his re-ascending the throne of Israel, and there to spend the remainder of his days. I know not which to admire most, the attachment of this good old man to David, or the grateful, generous effusions of David's heart in return! Both of them acted their part in the fear and presence of the God of Israel, and both of them shared in the smiles of providence in producing the restoration of the exiled king. The reply of Barzillai to David's invitation is so highly interesting, and must especially be so to every aged person, that we will make it the subject of another paragraph.

III. "And Barzillai said unto the king, How long



have I to live, that I should go up with the king unto Jerusalem? I am this day fourscore years old: and can I discern between good and evil? can thy servant taste what I eat or what I drink? can I hear any more the voice of singing-men and singing-women? wherefore then should thy servant be yet a burden unto my lord the king? Thy servant will go a little way over Jordan with the king: and why should the king recompense it me with such a reward?" No one can read this answer but with admiration of this good and great man's character. We can have no doubt that this interview with David was held under the strongest impression that Barzillai believed the period of his dissolution was near at hand. "How long have I to live," said he, "that I should go up with the king unto Jerusalem?" The taper of my life is now quivering in its socket, my life may expire before I shall reach that consecrated city, or should it burn so long as to allow me to enter within its walls, I can enjoy its privileges but a few days, and then I shall drop in death. Surely this was one of the wise men, as Moses expresses it, who "considered his latter end;" and therefore he stands as a fine example to all in the vale of years. For indeed those who most correctly estimate the brevity of human life, will make the best improvement of the fragments that remain. It is remarkable that this should have been upon the old man's birth-day. "I am this day," said he, "fourscore years old." Ten years more than the ordinary life of

man. Some are more observant of their birth-days than others, but such a day to an aged man like Barzillai, must bring to recollection a multitude of events in the history of so long a life. The day was memorable to this old man for the restoration of his king, and while he so readily mentioned his age as an apology for not accepting the invitation of David, his whole demeanor expressed his consciousness of the protecting hand of his God. To strengthen and justify his apology, Barzillai makes David a very affecting acknowledgment of the natural infirmities attached to his extreme age. "Can I," said he, "discern between good and evil?" This cannot have been a defect in his moral nature, else we should not have heard so much of his kindness and generosity to David and his men; but I presume the exercise of his judgment is so intended as to signify, not that by going to Jerusalem he could not have aided David, either as a statesman or as a judge. His appetite and relish had declined, for, said he, "can thy servant taste what I eat or what I drink?" This failure in the organs of taste is a common appendage to old age, when the most simple diet becomes the most acceptable and nutritive. What gratification then would he have found in the luxuries of a court! The richest banquets, the most delicious wines, and the most costly appendages to festivity, would be spread in vain for him. How different is this in the case of many who indulge an excessive desire after worldly luxuries, and when they possess

them, have no appetite to enjoy them? No wonder that Barzillai's hearing was nearly lost, for he said, "Can I hear any more the voice of singing-men and singing-women?" He knew that David himself was an exquisite master in music, and was passionately fond of his harp; that in his court, as well as in the worship of God, he expected vocal and instrumental music would be performed in the highest perfection, but what good would the melody of sounds do to him, when he had no ear to enjoy them? This answer to David's invitation was so just, natural, and satisfying, that the king acquiesced, and pressed it not again. Still Barzillai requested two favors of the king, in which he proves his sense of obligation for the invitation of David, and his serious disposition to prepare for his last change, when he should go the way of death, to return no more. These were so instructive, that we shall attempt to derive a few lessons from them for our improvement.

IV. Though Barzillai declined the grateful offer of David, he said unto the king, "Let thy servant, I pray thee, turn back again, that I may die in mine own city, and be buried by the grave of my father and my mother." How seriously intent was this venerable old man's mind and heart upon death and eternity, from which David's generous offer could not divert him. Instead of a wish to see and enjoy the splendor of the court at Jerusalem, he thought that the grave yard of his deceased family

could teach better lessons on the vanity of human greatness, and the necessity of preparing to meet his God. From the great age of Barzillai we may naturally presume that his father and his mother must have been dead many years, and that their bones were mouldering in the grave. But his affection for their memory was still alive in his heart, and no better employment was suited to his last days than visiting their tomb, and reflecting upon it as a memento of his own mortality. If cheerfulness be requisite to bear up the mind under the pressure of old age, some may suppose that Barzillai was mistaken in the mournful choice which he made of the grave yard. But such persons may be far more mistaken than he was, for carnal mirth but ill suited the texture of his mind. It would have embittered his joys, and been quite discordant with the future expectations of a man fourscore years old, who carried about him abundant evidence that very soon his body should sleep in death, and his soul appear before his God and Judge. Rather to be pitied is that aged individual who, by his unpardoned sins and unsanctified heart, is unfit to die, and yet his appetites are still keen for the vanities and pleasures of a wicked world! The other request Barzillai made of David was on behalf of his son. "Behold thy servant Chimham; let him go over with my lord the king; and do to him what shall seem good unto thee." There is a respectful propriety in this proposal, for if the father was too aged and infirm, and more likely to be

a burden to the king, his son may be of some real advantage, and he would take the favor as conferred upon himself. Barzillai was too old to accept David's offer ; he had done with the world, and the world had almost done with him, but he was desirous to embrace the offer in favor of Chimham, his son, that by going with the king he might rise into public life far more useful and honorable than remaining at home in a more secluded station. Indeed every parent is commendably justified in embracing a proposal which may promise greater prosperity to his children, though it be a sacrifice to himself to part with their company at a time when extreme age calls for the attention and kindness of all, and more especially of his own children. David instantly saw the propriety of the old man's proposal, and with a nobleness and generosity of spirit which dignified his character, instantly replied, "Chimham shall go over with me, and I will do to him that which shall seem good unto thee : and whatsoever thou shall require of me, that I will do for thee." It is not uncommon to hear persons attributing rudeness or want of cultivation to the manners of the ancients, but it may be asked, whether a transaction in modern times could have been conducted with greater propriety, nobleness of spirit, dignity of manner, or Christian affection, than what so conspicuously appeared between Barzillai and David ? Let this history be read with attention, and it will be adopted as an interesting and improving model. David took Chimham in charge, and

conducted him to Jerusalem; and although little is recorded of what the king did for him, yet it is generally believed that he gave him an ample inheritance, as we find in Jeremiah xli. 17, a place bearing his name. And certain it is, that when David grew in years, so far from forgetting the kindness he had received from Barzillai, he commended his son Chimham to the special attention of his own son Solomon. 1 Kings ii. 7.

V. The history conducts us to witness the parting scene between David and Barzillai. The king and his company were now ready for their departure, and Barzillai, though aged and infirm, executed his intention of going a little way over Jordan with him and then return. It is said they passed over Jordan in a ferry-boat, and when the king was come over, he kissed Barzillai, and blessed him; and Barzillai returned to his own place, and the king went on to Gilgal, and Chimham went with him, and eventually arrived in safety and triumph at Jerusalem. How affecting must have been this parting to David, and to all who witnessed the scene! What emotions of soul must David have felt when he gave his aged friend the affectionate token of a final farewell, to see his face no more! How full of gratitude to God for his restoration and the kindness of his friend, when he lifted up his voice and blessed him! From a scene like this, so full of piety, and so full of instruction, permit me to close the history by offering some advice to my aged reader.

1. In this short history you have a fine view of the temper and gratitude of David, the man of God, while stripped of the ensigns of royalty. When God enriches the soul of man with his grace and fear, his virtues appear more splendid in the shades of adversity than in the sunshine of prosperity. Should my reader, therefore, be walking in the path of affliction, may he exhibit no other features than those which characterize the meek, the humble, and the patient child of grace, knowing that all the Lord's will concerning him is love. Remember too, that the same Lord who inspired the heart of Barzillai with kindness to David while suffering under the misfortune of his exile, can administer to him a refreshing cordial by hands unknown and when least expected.

2. In Barzillai we see how honorably and usefully old age may wear out. Though fourscore years old, he exhibited the character of an active man. His ample supplies to David, his attention to the king at his departure, and his going a little way over Jordan, teach us that he was a healthy, lively, warm-hearted, old Israelite. Some aged persons feel a greater lassitude than others, but if you take Barzillai for an example, you will strive against a slumbering disposition; and although it would be improper, if not dangerous, for a very old man to make an over exertion, a share of activity will prove highly beneficial. However, forget not the active benevolence of Barzillai, and pray that the same spirit may glow

in your bosom. Remember too, that "whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" 1 John iii.

17. To tell an old man to be charitable because he will soon die and leave the world behind him, is making a cold argument out of necessity. As a Christian, you have nobler motives. The goodness of God to you in the course of a long life, the love of Christ in saving you, and the hope you possess of a glorious immortality, these are strong excitements to acts of kindness and love, which never fail to diffuse pleasure in the bosom, while the hand is extended to relieve the needy. Go then and do likewise.

3. The wish of Barzillai to return home to improve his mind on the subject of mortality, and to know the end of his days, in preference to the enjoyments of the scenes of grandeur in the court at Jerusalem, was a strong mark of his piety, and a fine example to the aged. There is such a thing as thoughtless old age, in having no more concern for a preparation for death and eternity than in the days of blooming youth. Sometimes a pious old Christian, from various causes, may be too inconsiderate of his expected change by death. Perhaps Barzillai was conscious of his own aptitude to forget his latter end, and therefore he avoided the gay scenes of life, preferring his own home, where, by visiting the graves of his departed family, he might cultivate a more



serious tone of feeling, than he could have done in the exciting scenes of public life, and more habitually prepare for his final change; if so, certainly every good old man must approve his choice.

4. There is something in our last stage of life which generally creates a wish for social attachment. When the sorrows of old age, and a want of activity, produce an unavoidable shade upon our path, society is necessary. A beloved companion, and affectionate child, or an invaluable friend is desirable; for although we all confess it is best to lean upon the Lord, still we are prone to look for an earthly staff, on which we may lean. Barzillai had his son Chimham, but he voluntarily resigned him to the care of David, with a view to his better interest. Perhaps the good old man might have had other sons or daughters at home, capable of administering to his comfort. At any rate, his conduct teaches us that when the interest of our children requires it, and God in his providence opens a way for their greater prosperity and happiness, whether by marriage or other settlement, it is our duty to acquiesce for their benefit

5. The final parting of David and Barzillai on the bank of Jordan, is equally affecting and instructive. Yes, it was on the bank of Jordan, the stream which divided the wilderness from the land of Canaan; strong emblem of the cold stream of death,

at which the dearest relatives on earth must separate, and bid a final adieu to all that is mortal! To that cold stream you, my aged friend, have nearly arrived. O that when you stand upon its brink, you may possess such serenity of mind, forgiveness of enemies, and glowing affection to your friends, as that you may quit the world in peace, as Barzillai and David parted. But especially may the true David, the Son of God, who died for you, and called you by his grace, grant you at that momentous period his tender embrace of eternal love, and bless you with the testimony of faith, and the joys of hope, that your spirit may pass away to the mansions of glory, to be forever blessed. Then your surviving friends will not sorrow at your departure, as those that have no hope, but rejoice that those who sleep in Jesus, God will bring with him on the morning of the resurrection, when you, with all your believing friends, and with all the redeemed of the Lord, shall meet again, personally know each other, and in your glorified bodies and spirits stand before the throne, and triumphantly sing salvation to God and the Lamb forever and ever. Amen.

## H A P P Y P O V E R T Y .

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Is poverty the aged Christian's lot ?  
Content dwells with him in his humble cell ;  
And by that prudent handmaid's constant care  
He finds a feast where discontent would starve,  
For daily blessings sweeten daily bread.  
Little has he to care for in this world,  
And much he thinks of that which is to come.

It must not be considered that these essays were written exclusively for those aged persons on whom a kind Providence has cast its choicest smiles. The poor will not be forgotten ; for if while a man enjoys the comforts of life under the painful infirmities of age, he needs both instruction and consolation, certainly he who suffers the pinch of poverty in the last stages of human life, must require an additional cordial to refresh his depressed mind. Although the instances of thoughtless persons being brought to know the Lord in old age are very few, it is possible this paper may be read by one who is conscious of his past unprofitable days, and who feels the importance of having his heart set right with his God before he goes hence to be no more seen, and therefore

will cordially receive the least degree of instruction. Besides, who will venture to deny, that the grace of God, and the charms of piety, can be found in a man's heart, though he lives in an humble cottage, and his table is spread with the most simple food ; or should he even be altogether dependent for his support in the habitation of charity ? Perhaps, in addition to these marks of necessity, he likewise mourns the loss of his friends, or labors under sickness in addition to the accumulating infirmities of age, and yet ardently thirsts after the sacred consolations of religion, unknown and undesired by many who abound in affluence. David bears testimony to the indulgent care of Providence over the needy ; for, said he, "I have been young, and now am old ; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed (though) begging bread." Psalm xxxvii. 25. And St. James assures us, that "God hath chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom, which he hath promised to them that love him." Chap. ii. 5.

Nothing is more common for misguided man than to make a false estimate of the nature and qualities of human happiness ; supposing that misery is an inseparable companion to poverty, or that happiness can alone dwell with the rich. This is an erroneous calculation, and is not only contrary to fact, but to the testimony of that blessed Lord who knows the state of man, and estimates the qualities both of happiness and misery. He declares that "a man's

life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." Luke xii. 15. On the contrary, "Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God." Psalm cxlvi. 5. It is however true, that some persons, by the force of temptation, are disposed to draw a conclusion unfavorable to themselves, from the pain, and the indigence which may attend them, and thus deprive themselves of a portion of that internal composure and felicity to which they are entitled. Suppose, therefore, I endeavor to state to you, that the happiness of God's children is of one and the same kind, whatever may be their station or external circumstances, whether in private or public life, rich or poor, high or low, young or old, bond or free. This, perhaps, may have a tendency to reconcile you to the lot which a wise and good God assigns you on earth, and will excite your gratitude for the share of internal happiness which you may enjoy.

The *source* or fountain from whence the happiness of God's redeemed children flows, is precisely the same. It is the same God and Father who hath loved them. They have one Mediator and Redeemer to whom they are united, and who has made one offering of himself upon the cross for them, and who now for ever lives to make intercession for them before the throne of God. There is one divine Spirit who operates upon all as the spirit of life, and is the only communicator of all the blessings of salvation and grace, which either the rich or the

poor can possibly enjoy, and which produce their internal comfort and happiness while here upon earth. The manner in which the personal happiness of the soul commences, is likewise the same, though different in degree, for it begins with their conversion to God. We all, like sheep, have gone astray; all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, all are under condemnation, and are children of wrath. The mind is darkened, the heart depraved, the judgment perverted, and the life is vanity and vexation of spirit; of course the sinner is without God and without Christ in the world, a stranger to that moral happiness which is essential for the soul to enjoy, in order to be at rest. Our Lord, therefore, hath assured us, that "except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God," whether it be in heaven above, or in the church upon earth. As there is but one kind of natural birth for every man born into the world of nature, whether he be the child of a prince or the child of a beggar, so there is but one spiritual birth into the world of grace, let the external circumstances of the man be rich or poor; and by this new birth he turns unto his God and Saviour Jesus Christ for all his happiness in time and in eternity. The *realities* which constitute the substantial happiness of the soul of a real Christian are exactly the same, let his particular religious denomination be what it may, or his age, or condition in the world, either prosperous or adverse. There is one blood of atonement to constitute his pardon, one robe of righteousness for

his justification, and one Spirit of adoption, whereby he enjoys communion with his God and Father. There is but one Gospel, and not another, which, while it reveals the unity of God's truth to be believed by every enlightened mind, directs the soul under all the variety of its wants, changes, and afflictions, to the one great source, the fulness of Christ, from which to receive grace for grace to preserve and increase his happiness. Besides, the graces which God bestows are all of the same kind, faith, hope, peace, love, joy, which diffuse their virtues alike in every man's breast who receives them, and become more or less operative, according as God seeth he may require. The whole of these truths are not only evident in the Scriptures, but from the experience of every man who has tasted that the Lord is gracious, let his nation, language, tongue, or outward condition, be of high or low regard. These are all the free grace gifts of God to his children, as much so as the sun gives light and joy to all, and as one heaven drops down rain and dew upon all: for what man has ever yet pretended to say, there is one salvation for the rich, and another for the poor? "Christ is all in all." As *society* promotes man's felicity on earth, so the Lord hath established his church, which is called "the house of the living God; and the household of faith," in which all his children, rich and poor, have an equal right, without the shadow of distinction; the same Gospel ministry, one baptism, one supper of the Lord, and one spiritual

communion, so that "they are all one in Christ Jesus." If the rich man, like king David, can say, "It is good for me to draw near to God," the poorest of God's children can say the same. I may certainly venture to affirm, that the obedience or services of the Christian poor, are as acceptable to the Lord, when performed in faith and love, as those of the rich; therefore Jesus took more approving notice of the poor "widow's mite," than of the abundance which the rich cast into the treasury. There is but one vale of death to pass through from time to eternity, whether by the rich or the poor; for the robes of state, and the tattered garment, must alike be thrown aside. The act of dying, whether upon a bed of down, or upon a bed of straw, admits of no difference to the soul of that man who dies in the Lord. And certainly there is but one heavenly home, where no distinction exists, all are employed in singing praises to God and the Lamb for ever and ever, as the consummation of their happiness.

My reader may now contrast the external circumstances of the rich with those of the poor; strip off the rags of the one, and the costly array of the other, and then form his own opinion where, and with whom, real happiness dwells. You will easily perceive, that whatever best resolves the will of man into the will of God, relieves the guilty conscience, and preserves it in peace with his offended Creator; bears up the mind with fortitude and composure beneath the sorrows of human life, thereby supplying



the absence of temporal good, refines the passions of the soul, promotes the cultivation of good will towards mankind, and inspires it with a well founded hope of immortality and glory. That all these things operating on the heart, temper, and life, must be acknowledged, in the scale of reason, to produce what we may venture to call a **HAPPY MAN**. All these are described in the Bible, and all these are the fruit of God's grace freely given to man, according to the sovereign pleasure of his will, whether the receiver be rich or poor, for "God is no respecter of persons." It is devoutly wished that the reader, whatever may be his station in life, may now contemplate and use these sentiments in application to himself. As all men are in the pursuit of happiness, and too many seek it in paths which disappoint their expectations, and lead them to misery, how desirable is it that every man should be practically convinced that there is no true happiness out of a Saviour's bosom! "In his favor there is life, and his loving-kindness is better than life," (Psalm xxx. 5,) for it supports under the weight of sorrow and the infirmities of age, while it sweetens all the temporal enjoyments which the world can afford, and gives the cheering prospect of an eternal state of felicity beyond the vale of death. I will now introduce a few observations, which I hope may have a tendency to reconcile my reader to the shades of poverty, through which he may be allotted to travel to his long home.

I. Persons in needy circumstances have frequently inquired, "How the unequal distribution of riches and poverty can consist with the universal benevolence of the Almighty?" Such ought to bear in remembrance, that as sinners we have forfeited all just claim upon his bounty. Every temporal favor, and every drop of mercy, comes to us through the death and mediation of Jesus Christ our Lord; and in the distribution of good, and of the evil of suffering, God has the wisest purposes to answer among the human family in general, and particularly so among those that fear his name. Under proper feelings of our extreme depravity, however weighty may be the load of affliction, we may truly say with David, "He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities." Psalm ciii. 10. This consideration will promote your humility and contentment in your present lot, and however uncomfortable or bad it may appear, it will inspire you with gratitude that it is no worse! A little acquaintance with the world will convince you that the different characters, relations, and circumstances of mankind resemble a vast machine, composed of a great number of wheels of various sizes, which, when set in motion, the one operating with the other, the greater with the less, produce the great design of the whole. Thus the poor man, under the pressure of want, may consider himself as the lesser wheel, and should feel, under God, his dependence on the rich to keep him in motion.

By this means opposite virtues, as well as opposite characters, become visible. The rich express their sympathy, kindness, and Christian charity to the needy, while the poor show their submission and pious gratitude to their benefactors; so that without this mixed state of society, those virtues would never become active and conspicuous. I will venture to say, that the poor old Christian, notwithstanding his penury and want, on cool reflection, will be found to possess some religious advantages above his rich brother. For instance, when a Christian enjoys a full table and a full purse, with his family around him, he may repeat, in the Lord's Prayer, "Give us this day our daily bread," he cannot possibly do it, with that faith and feeling, as a poor pious man does, whose family is destitute, and needs the immediate interposition of Providence for its supply. The rich man's barn being full, he knows where to go for his corn, and it is hoped expresses his gratitude to God for the abundance which he enjoys; but the poor Christian, while he prays over an empty table, "Our Father, give us this day our daily bread," fixes his faith upon the promise of his God, and anxiously looks for the interposition of Providence, somewhat as in the cases of the raven who brought flesh to hungry Elijah; or as one's being suddenly directed to a well of water, as was Hagar in the wilderness, to relieve her famishing child. A pious rich man may be rich in the faith of our Lord Jesus for his soul, yet it is the poor Christian that feels most the virtues of

faith, both for soul and body, and therefore he has a double advantage. Besides, on reading the history of the Bible, a pious rich man may admire the interposition of Providence in relieving the necessitous, and with peculiar pleasure will remember "the widow's barrel of meal, and her cruse of oil," yet can make no application of such kind of interposition in favor of himself. When he reads the promises which God hath made to supply the temporal wants of his poor afflicted children, he cannot but see in them the goodness and loving-kindness of the Lord; but still he does not apply them so much to himself, because he has a sufficiency, and is not in immediate need of them. How different then is it with the necessitous Christian! He exercises personal faith with the word of his God, lives upon the promise, and waits till the raven comes with the meat, or the well of water be discovered, and then, O how sweet and welcome the favor?

II. If you have such advantage over your opulent brother in the Gospel, I know you will readily believe me when I say, that your advantages are much greater over a rich worldling that fears not God. Under all the pressure of your infirmities and poverty you would not exchange your state for his. His happiness is in his gold and silver, but he is wretchedly poor towards God; you have a share of the unsearchable riches of Christ, which are of more value to you than a thousand worlds! He may say,

“I have much goods laid up for many years,” when suddenly the thread of life may be cut, his happiness be at an end, and his soul, more poor than your body, pass away in its sins to a state of misery, while you live in the consoling hope, that after death you will be admitted to the inheritance of the saints in light, to be for ever blest !

III. From these considerations you may perceive, that although we here live in a mixed, variegated state, some abounding in riches, and others surrounded with poverty, it is the duty of every man to examine his character, as accountable to his God. If men at death, and at the day of judgment, are found in their sins, it will be immaterial whether they had been rich or poor. Therefore it becomes your duty to examine, not so much the marks of poverty under which you may exist, as the state of your soul in the sight of your God. You perceive, that in this paper I have attempted to state in what the happiness of God’s children consists, independently of their external station and circumstances, and you may easily inquire on what your real happiness is founded ; from what source it flows ; and to what object it is directed. If you have reason to believe that Christ has engaged your heart and hand, if you enjoy peace and communion with God as your heavenly Father ; and although you now walk in the shades of poverty, it is your meat and drink to do the will of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus

Christ unto eternal life, you certainly have reason to rejoice in all your tribulations. "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me." Hebrews xiii. 5, 6. Remember, also, that riches are not the best things in the world, else God would give the greatest share of them to those who love and serve him. The more a man lives upon in the world, the less of God he feels in his heart, and the less he is prepared to die. As you are advanced in years, your poverty, pain, and infirmities, can last but a little longer, and it will make very little difference to the safety and happiness of your soul, die when or where you may, or whether your body be laid in the grave in obscurity, or attended with a sumptuous funeral. Forget not the case of Lazarus at the rich man's gate. He had no home; he was full of sores; dogs were his only physicians; the crumbs of the rich man's table were denied him; none was there to regard his burial; yet his soul became the charge of angels, and was laid in the bosom of Abraham. If you have no earthly friends, let it teach you the inestimable value of the friendship of Jesus, who is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother. The poor old sinner who wraps himself up in the tattered filthy garment of his ignorance, stupidity, and depravity, despising the tender mercy of the Saviour, is doubly poor, and

doubly wretched, demanding your pity and your prayers, while you have reason to rejoice in the treasures of a Redeemer's grace, more valuable to you than the riches of the globe! In addition to these sentiments, designed to reconcile your mind, and promote, what I call your **HAPPY POVERTY**, I will close by saying, that a pious poor man has the honor of most resembling the outward appearance of his Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Though he was Lord of all, yet while here below, he had no where to lay his head, and was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; therefore look above, and heaven will make amends for all.

Father, whate'er of earthly bliss  
Thy sov'reign will denies,  
Accepted at thy throne, let this,  
My humble pray'r arise ;

Give me a calm and thankful heart,  
From every murmur free;  
The blessings of thy grace impart,  
And make me live to thee :

Let the sweet hope that thou art mine  
My life and death attend,  
Thy presence through my journey shine,  
And crown my journey's end.





# W I N T E R ,

## AN EMBLEM OF OLD AGE.

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Hail ! aged pilgrim, whither goest thou ?  
The wint'ry storm beats hard upon thy brow.  
Fear not, if Canaan be thy destin'd home,  
Thy Saviour will not let thee go alone.  
When flesh shall fail, thy body drop in death,  
Thy soul shall then be number'd with the just.

How admirably designed are the four seasons of the year to illustrate the equal stages of human life ! The beauties and vivacity of spring remind us of the charming days of youth, when all was gay, and animated beyond description. Summer is occupied as the laborious time for cultivation, in hope of a golden harvest. In autumn, while we attempt to gather our fruit, we ourselves begin to fade, as the leaf changes and trembles on the twig ; and this is succeeded by the last stage, the winter of old age. The Christian knows how to apply these several seasons to himself, more especially in the various stages of his spiritual life ; in each of which he will devoutly confess, that the grace of our Lord Jesus

has been abundantly verified. We shall therefore now make an attempt to realize the last stage of his earthly existence, which we will call the WINTER OF OLD AGE. And may that blessed Saviour, who is said to have been born in the season of winter, condescend to sanctify our meditations, and revive our spirits with his celestial smiles!

I. We acknowledge that the seasons of the year are ordained by the wisdom of the Almighty, who from the beginning hath said, "While the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night, shall not cease." Genesis viii. 22. David, when contemplating the works of God, confessed, "The day is thine, the night also is thine: thou hast prepared the light and the sun. Thou hast set all the borders of the earth: thou hast made summer and winter." Psalm lxxiv. 16, 17. As in the natural world, so is it in the human creation. Times, seasons, and periods of existence are fixed, and they cannot pass their bounds; for "is there not an appointed time to man upon earth? are not his days also like the days of a hireling?" Job vii. 1. One third of the human race are supposed to die in the spring of infancy and youth; in the summer of active labor multitudes drop in death; the autumn of years carry off many to the dust, as leaves fall from the trees; and comparatively very few survive to reach the winter of old age. Such, therefore, who have been

preserved by the Lord to so great a length of days, have the highest obligation to praise his name for fulfilling his promise; "Even to your old age I am he; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you." Isaiah xlv. 4.

- **II.** Persons in youth or manhood may contemplate the scenes of old age, and indulge a supposition that they shall live to realize them; but often death blasts the prospect! Old age, therefore, has the advantage. They who are old, have not only seen the length of years, but can retrace the actual scenes through which they have passed. The spring of youth, the labors of the summer, and the fruitful time of autumn; these, with the numerous events which they produced, are as familiar to their mind as though they were of yesterday. In this view, the good man cannot but clothe himself with the garment of humility, while he attunes his heart and lips to sing the praises of his God and Saviour, who hath so many years supported his soul in life, and conducted his steps so near to his journey's end.

**III.** In winter the days are evidently shorter, and little activity can be manifested, little service can be performed; and it is equally true, that the aged imbibe an impression, that their days grow shorter, and upon earth there must be few remaining, while the animal and intellectual faculties relax so sensibly,

that they have little ability to perform what they once would have called "half a day's work." Happy the reader if he can say, "Well, let the days shorten as God may determine; the shorter and swifter my days, the more speedily my journey shall terminate, and I shall be conveyed to the enjoyment of immortality, where days and years, summer and winter, shall be known no more."

IV. In winter the days are not only shorter, but it is a time of comparative darkness; and the natural sight of the aged man so sensibly fails, that objects once contemplated with delight become obscure, lose their charms, and afford little satisfaction. His favorite employment is reading, especially that of the Bible; in which he must be aided by clearer glasses, and a larger print: and not unfrequently the sight fails so much, that, as Solomon says, "The windows are darkened." Well for such a person, if in his more early day, he followed the example of David, "Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee;" (Psalm cxix. 11.) for now, in the dark days of old age, a sanctified memory will aid him to bring to recollection many parts and promises of God's word, which will fortify his faith, enliven his hope, and lead him to more sensible communion with his Saviour. If, therefore, the reader should have made such good use of his Bible, he will, in his dark day, find that the word of Christ dwelling in his heart richly, will support

his tottering mind, and afford him the most sublime satisfaction.

V. Who knows not that the season of winter is cold? And what aged persons are there whose animal sensibilities do not teach them that the reduction of their blood, which formerly warmed and animated their system, now becomes languid in its circulation, rendering them more susceptible of the chilling air of winter; so that not unfrequently they exclaim, with David, Who can "stand before his cold?" Frequently the aged are afflicted with rheumatic complaints, or are smitten with palsy, which stiffens the more active muscles, so that they feel somewhat like the stream which, by the effect of cold, is congealed into ice, and this produces a sensation, which not improperly may be called an anticipation of the cold of death. Under such complaints the artificial aid of warmer clothing, and a lively fireside, are scarcely sufficient to keep their persons in any degree comfortable. Medicinal aid, by various applications, may produce an alleviation, but no cure; and should not all these remind the afflicted of his colder grave, and teach him the necessity of habitually preparing for his great and final change? Happy the man, under all these icy painful infirmities, who hath his hope fixed alone on Christ, and smiles in prospect of immortality and glory! Besides, as these complaints are common appendages to the winter of old age, the rich, who

enjoy abundant means to alleviate their pain, should be excited to gratitude to the Lord, and indulge benevolent feelings towards the numerous aged poor, perhaps more loaded with infirmities than themselves, and contribute bountifully to their relief: For "blessed is he that considereth the poor and needy, the Lord will strengthen him upon his bed of languishing: and make all his bed in his sickness." Psalm xli.

VI. Winter is invariably attended with high winds, storms, cold rain, and frequent damp fogs, all which have a great effect upon the animal spirits and the debilitated constitutions of the aged. If such inclement weather compels the old man to keep within doors, let me remind him, that it is not unusual for the Lord to reserve new and unexpected afflictions for his people to endure in the last stages of life, and that each should lead him nearer to his Saviour. So it was with David, for just as he was about to exchange his earthly throne for a Paradise above, his sons harrowed his soul by contending for his crown. Winter storms, however disagreeable to our feelings, have their important uses; the bending of the trees affects their roots, loosens the earth, and aids the fibres to take a fresh spring, and faster hold, so that their growth is thereby increased. And the storms of life, and more especially those which happen to us in declining years, produce an astonishing good effect upon the Christian's heart, loosening his attachment to this earth, so that instead of being

blown down, or torn up by the roots, he is, by the grace of God, more firmly "rooted in Christ," and eventually he is found bearing more abundant fruit to the honor of his Lord. Fear not then, O Christian, these storms are "working together for the good of those who love God, and who are the called according to his purpose." Romans viii. 28. But these damp wintry fogs not only contribute to make winter still more dreary, but they sensibly depress the animal spirits, and are painfully annoying to the infirmities of age. Disagreeable as they are, they still are monitors, and teach you to deplore the still more depressing fog which unbelief and other evils create within your mind and heart. Under such despondency the good man will frequently exclaim, "Is his mercy clean gone for ever? will he be favorable no more?" and, like Job, "I go mourning without the sun." When will this dark cloud and this heavy fog disperse, that I may see and feel the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in his beams? Remember, aged friend, with you it is winter, and no winter is without its fogs and storms; and every aged man has found it so. While this consideration may aid in cultivating your submission to the will of God, who maketh the winter as well as the summer, measureth the length of our days, and ruleth our storms, and who also is able to disperse the oppressive fog from the mind; look forward to that eternal state of repose where no such evils can possibly exist.

VII. Almost every portion of the globe is visited by the snows of winter. The hills, vales, and trees, are covered with this exquisitely white mantle, presenting a scenery in direct contrast with the beauties of spring, and the abundant fruitfulness of summer. Nature then appears in a state of comparative death, covered with her white shroud. But let us ask,

“Why hover snows and wanton in the air,  
Fall by degrees, and clothe the hoary year?”

Certainly among other lessons in instruction, to teach the aged those subjects of interest which are adapted to the last stages of their existence. Who produceth this wonderful phenomenon in nature? David assures us, that “God giveth snow like wool: he scattereth the hoar-frost like ashes.” Psalm cxlvii. 16. God preserveth the life of man to old age, and at this late period it is usual to perceive the color of the hair to be changed, and his head covered with locks white as snow. Happy if the conduct of aged persons should exhibit a purity of temper, and amiableness of manners, more valuable than the snow which cometh down from above, for “the hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness.” Proverbs xvi. 31. When the aged man, under depression of mind, brings to recollection the sins of his youth, the greater transgressions of his ripened years, and then penetrates the secret evils of his heart, the descending snow



teaches him the holy perfection which the law of his God requires, and which indeed he wishes to possess. But in like faith with David, this humble consciousness of sins leads him to contemplate the virtues of his Saviour's blood, and with that royal penitent to pray, "Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." Psalm li. 7. No longer able to combat the fleecy storm without doors, the good man, by looking through his window, and contemplating the scene, every flake of snow he perceives becomes a monitor, which sends him to his Bible to learn that most charming lesson, "As the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereunto I sent it." Isaiah lv. 10, 11. This excites his faith, and aids his prayers, that in his wintry days of old age he may more frequently read and abundantly enjoy the influence of the word and promise of his God, to be food for his soul, and make him more animated to honor the Lord the residue of his days. Snow is usually but a transient visiter in our climate; the rays of the sun, the return of mild and damp air, or descending rains, cause it to melt and disappear. Just emblem this of the sudden changes which have occurred in the history of the Christian's own long life, which,

independent of the goodness of God, has been too much like vanity and vexation of spirit. Even now the short continuance of snow, and the variableness of the weather, afford a strong comparison with the fluctuation of his health, and the powers of his mind, convincing him of the great felicity and safety in confiding for eternal salvation upon the merits of his great Redeemer, with whom there is no variableness nor shadow of turning.

VIII. Gloomy and uncomfortable as is the season of winter, it is not without its necessary employments. The fisherman, while the waters are bound in icy chains, is industriously employed in making and mending his nets. The husbandman, although the frozen clods of the field resist the action of his plough, can thrash his grain in the barn for the use of his family, or to be in readiness for the market. So the aged Christian, if by his natural infirmities he be incapable of exercise without doors, finds it necessary to employ his time in whatever may contribute to keep up the circulation of the few animal powers which remain, lest he become a burden to himself: for notwithstanding an inclination to ease, nothing is more injurious to a person in the decline of life than the want of some means to keep up a degree of energy in the mental and animal system. As some winters are less severe than others, so in the history of the aged, we see many persons support their infirmities with less inconvenience and pain,

while others shrink beneath their weight, and are rendered almost inactive. Still in this last season of life the mind of a gracious man will find good employment in reading, in examination, and in prayer, looking to the Lord to enable him to cultivate his faith and patience, which may be called his winter graces. Besides, as out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh, a pious aged person may occasionally instruct his domestic circle, and his visiting friends, for it is said, "With the aged there is wisdom;" at any rate, this would make a pleasant "winter's evening at home." Indeed it is to be lamented, that an aged person, who has for many years made a profession of religion, should occupy his chair by the fireside, provided he retains his senses and his speech, and yet have no disposition to speak of the goodness of his God, the charms of his Saviour, and the hope of felicity beyond the grave! Let the pious reader duly weigh these sentiments, and it is presumed he will be convinced of their propriety, as means to make his latter days more cheerful to himself and more useful to others. You, as well as other aged persons, must be convinced that in the ordinary course of nature your animal frame must soon wear out; but I recommend you to make every prudent exertion by such small degrees of exercise as your strength may permit, which will not only produce many advantages, but after your decease, will prevent any one from writing upon your grave-stone, "This old man died of indolence."

IX. Barren and unfruitful as is the winter season, it bears upon its cold bosom the strong marks of the Creator's beneficent hand, who reserveth for us the fruits of the harvest, so that corn and wine replenish our table. This will certainly teach us that the Lord is not unmindful of his infirm people in the winter of their old age, for they then must need the kindness of his hand to administer to their necessities. Not unfrequently he so blesses the labor of their hands in the more active portion of their days, as to allow them a surplus to lay up for their use when the infirmities of age shall forbid their laboring any longer. Supplies thus produced, must certainly give a relish to the food on the table, and create devout thankfulness. This, however, is not an invariable rule in the providence of God. Many have but a scanty subsistence in their last days, while perhaps the greater number of the Lord's poor endure a severe winter in abject poverty. It is certainly true, that in old age we need those little refreshments and comforts which, in more active days, were not so necessary. Under such privations, how happy must be the good old man, who, by faith and love, can live upon his God and Saviour. Well may such an one say, "I have meat to eat which the world knows not of; my meat is to do the will of my Father who is in heaven." Paul said, "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content." However difficult this lesson may be to learn in the frost and snow of poverty,

the same divine Teacher can so instruct the mind, and enrich the poor old man's heart, as to produce a serenity which few even of the pious rich may be said to enjoy, while, at the same time, he can look forward to the bliss of eternity, where he shall hunger and thirst no more.

X. After all that can be said of the uncomfortable and stormy state of winter, as descriptive of the last stage of this mortal life, we may certainly add, that it is a time of expectation. Were we not to anticipate a returning spring, which keeps alive the depressed mind and feelings, winter would be little better than one continued scene of sorrow. O how pitiable is that old man's case, that endures the inconvenience, the pains, and the miseries attendant on this wintry period, without hope in a Saviour, or a sincere concern for a future state of happiness beyond the grave! Not so the pious old Christian. Though himself a sinner, deserving an exclusion from the bliss of heaven, and meriting only the shades of misery, yet by the faith which the Lord hath given him, he rests alone upon the blood and righteousness of Jesus the Son of God, as the only foundation of his salvation, from whom he draws the consolations of peace and hope, smiling upon death as his friend to open the consecrated passage to immortality and glory. Therefore this aged servant of the Lord can say with David, "My soul, wait thou only upon God: for my expectation is from

him." Psalm lxii. 5. On the truth and promises of God, we may rest our future blessedness with certainty, as the winter shall be succeeded by the beauties of the spring. Most assuredly the compassionate Saviour will bear his aged servants through their wintry storms. When their body shall go down to the grave, it shall rest in hope, and the soul shall wing its way to the bosom of its God. On the morning of the resurrection, their vile bodies shall be raised like unto the glorious body of their Saviour. Soul and body will then be re-united, and both be received into inconceivable bliss! The mysteries of Providence will then be unfolded, while the riches of grace will appear in their fullest lustre. These redeemed servants of the Lord dwell in the society of the just, made perfect in peace, holiness, and love, all uniting in harmonious praises to God and the Lamb for ever. Delightful prospects! cheering excitements these to an aged Christian to enable him to endure his last conflicts, and, as he journeys onward, to hail the time when he shall exchange his winter for an eternal spring.

# THE GRASSHOPPER.

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“AND THE GRASSHOPPER SHALL BE A BURDEN.”—ECCLES. XII 5.

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Little insect ! what can be  
In sprightliness compar'd to thee ?  
To thee of all things upon earth,  
Life is no longer than thy mirth.  
Little insect, sprightly thou,  
Yet neither age nor winter know.

THE intention of introducing the Grasshopper in this paper, is because Solomon makes use of it, when describing the infirmities and burdens of old age. I may, therefore, possibly amuse if not instruct the reader, if I give a short sketch of the natural history of the Grasshopper; advert to a few passages of Scripture, in which it is introduced; and the use which Solomon makes of it, in application to the aged.

NATURAL HISTORY OF THE GRASSHOPPER.—Naturalists, under the class of *Gryllus*, place the Locust, the Grasshopper, and the House Cricket; and consider

the three as constituting one genus of insects. Locusts, in many countries, have proved very destructive, devouring the fruits and vegetables of the earth; and have frequently been sent as sore judgments from the offended Majesty of heaven. The House Cricket, being of a cold constitution, is usually found harboring in the crevices of brick-work, in fire-places, ovens, furnaces, and wherever warmth can be enjoyed. This little animal's annoyance arises from its chirping, solitary noise, especially in the night, which is not only disagreeable to a family, but has in weak-minded persons given rise to fears and conjectures of expected mortality. The Grasshopper is an inhabitant of fields, meadows and gardens, where they are usually found in vast numbers. They differ materially in size and color, according to the climate they inhabit; those found in Africa are supposed to be the largest. The color of this insect is with us generally of a pale green, bearing brown streaks upon the back. The shape of the head somewhat resembles that of a horse; it has two small eyes, which are very prominent; its mouth is covered with a sort of buckler, or shield, and armed with sharp teeth; besides which, it has feelers or horns, very long and pointed. It has three pairs of legs, the hinder ones being much larger than those in front, which gives it so much agility in hopping. It is likewise furnished with two pair of wings, like insects of the fly kind, which are unequal in size, and the belly is very large when compared with the other parts of its body, and is composed of eight rings, or divisions.



The tail is covered with a very light down, not unlike that of a mouse ; it is also forked, instead of terminating in a point, and the end of it furnished with a two-edged instrument, which it can sheath or unsheath at pleasure. With this pointed instrument, the grasshopper pierces the earth in autumn, and deposits its eggs, which, in the month of May, are hatched by the heat of the sun. The chirping of this little creature is extremely insignificant, observed to proceed from the male only, and is seldom heard till the setting of the sun, in the silence of the evening ; this voice or noise is supposed to be made by a swift vibration of its wings, either against one another, or by the action of its feet. In describing this insect, I have avoided all those scientific phrases, which are usually introduced in Natural History, as it is my object to render it as plain as possible to every reader.

It is my design, from this short sketch of the Grasshopper, not so much to amuse the reader, as to advert to some of those passages of Scripture in which it is named, and from them to draw a few instructive lessons.

In the laws of God, delivered by Moses to the Israelites, the Grasshopper, as the fourth species of Locust, was pronounced *clean*, and might be eaten. Lev. xi. 22. These creatures were not only eaten by Jews, but by surrounding nations ; and Pliny informs us, that the Parthians esteemed them as very agreeable and grateful food. The Ethiopians live upon them all the year, hardening them in smoke, and

seasoning them with salt. It is said that they are still eaten in Barbary, where they dry them in ovens to preserve them, and then eat them alone, or pounded and mixed with milk; and that they have a taste somewhat like the shrimp. Doctor Shaw informs us in his travels, that, "In Barbary he eat of them fried and salted, and that they tasted to him very much like the cray fish." We are certain from Matt iii. 4. that a species of this kind of creature, became at least part of the food of John the Baptist, when he inhabited the desert. Custom alone deters us from trying the experiment, or possibly we should be as fond of them, as the French are of frogs.

On the return of the spies, whom Moses sent to examine the Land of Canaan, while two of them brought a ponderous bunch of grapes as a specimen of its fruitfulness; the others represented the sons of Anak as giants, strong men of prodigious size. They said unto Moses, we are in our own sight as grasshoppers; and so we were in their sight. Numbers xiii. By this description, they not only brought an evil report concerning the land, but expressed their own weakness and insignificance in comparison with those prodigious warlike men, by likening themselves to feeble and contemptible grasshoppers; and this comparison was equally designed to deter the camp of Israel from going over Jordan, as not being able to proceed against such formidable enemies and obtain a conquest. We can therefore have no hesitation in saying, that this evil report of the spies was founded

on cowardice, unworthy of the character of Israelites, and in direct opposition to the promise of God, that they should inherit the land of Canaan.

If the spies sent to Canaan thought themselves so diminutive and insignificant as grasshoppers in the eyes of the gigantic sons of Anak: in what estimate shall we hold the multitude of human beings, when compared with the majesty of the most high God? The prophet Isaiah, with inimitable excellence, reproving idolaters, and describing the divine Majesty, says, "It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers." Isa. xl. 22. How noble is the image, and how exquisitely fine is the contrast! He who filleth the highest heavens with his immensity and glory, condescends to take his seat upon the circle of the earth, beholding and governing the whole by his invariable laws, dispensing his favors or his judgments according to the purity of his will, and carrying forward his gracious designs in bringing many sons into glory; yet, in the sight of this great God, the inhabitants of the earth are represented as grasshoppers. Their multitude, succession of generations, feebleness and insignificance, justify the contrast, while it casts a shade over the supposed dignity of human nature; for although some of them are elevated by strength of mind, and distinguished by marks of grandeur, while others are covered with the gloomy shades of poverty and misery; yet before the supreme Being, they are alike insignificant, and shrink into vileness, as the grasshoppers of the

field, which chirp beneath the meridian sun, take their nightly repose upon blades of the grass, and finally drop their wings in death. Who can pass over this sublime description of the God of heaven and earth without expressions of adoration and praise? And who can deny the justness of the contrast between God and his creatures, and with all their boast of pomp and pride, must not blush at their crimes, and sink into abasement? Still happy is the good man, and happier the aged Christian, who, in sincerity, can say, "He who sitteth upon the circle of the earth is my God, and my Saviour; and though in myself I am insignificant and worthless as the grasshopper of the field, he hath granted me the riches of his mercy, and a cheering hope full of immortality and glory!"

What may still be more interesting to the reader, is the introduction of this insect by Solomon, in his admirable picture of old age in the twelfth chapter of Ecclesiastes; among the many infirmities attendant on this last stage of human life, he says, "and the grasshopper shall be a burden." As this animal eats up vegetation, and leaves the appearance of winter, so the usual diseases and infirmities of age, frequently devour the strength and animal vivacity of man; so that he becomes a burden to himself, and the body is gradually worn down to the grave. On Solomon's describing the infelicities of old age, by the emblem of a grasshopper, several writers have ventured to offer their opinions. A Dr. Smith, who has been quoted by Gill and Horne on the text, and Harris in

his Natural History of the Bible, says, "To this insect the preacher compares a dry, shrunk, shrivelled, crumpling, craggy old man; his backbone sticking out, his knees projecting forward, his arms backwards, his head downwards, and the apophyses or bunching part of the bones in general enlarged. And from this exact likeness, without all doubt, says he, arose the fable of Tithonus, who, living to extreme old age, was at last turned into a grasshopper." So far the opinion of Dr. Smith extends. Whether he formed his comparisons, or drew this likeness from some one of his particular acquaintances; or he himself was then an aged man, and by his looking at a glass, found that his own person and features resembled those of a grasshopper, we are not informed. I find it necessary however, to differ in opinion with the learned Doctor, and view his hasty comment as an unwarrantable burlesque on the infirmities of age. For it is well known that unless a person, by chronic diseases, or by accident, may previously have been deformed in his limbs, and that his deformity be increased by contractions usually attendant on the decay of animal nature: we certainly are not accustomed to see such persons deformed by the mere effects of age, but on the contrary, they preserve a great proportion of their animal symmetry. Solomon was too wise and cultivated, and had too great a veneration for old age, to compare it to such a deformed little insect. Besides, it will require of the reader but a few minutes reflection upon the text, to produce a conviction of the

Doctor's great mistake. So far indeed from this sacred penman intending to compare an aged man to a grasshopper, he says, that the grasshoppers shall be to him a burden. As this is certainly and justly to be applied to the last stages of human life, perhaps the reader may be gratified by pursuing the subject a little further, and taking a short view of the several parts, which this fifth verse contains.

The wise man describes the aged as being "afraid of that which is high;" that is, lofty places, such as mountains, hills, towers, elevated buildings, or high stairs, which, through the feebleness of the knees and the difficulty of breathing, an aged person is fearful to ascend, as he is apprehensive of his safety. "Fears shall be in the way," because through the dimness of the sight, they are incapable of perceiving the path in which they ought to walk, and are obliged to guard against obstructions, as their natural strength and fortitude of mind, with which they formerly could outbrave the difficulties of the way, now give place to timidity and fear of danger. "The almond tree shall flourish;" their heads shall be as full of gray hairs, as the almond tree in the spring is covered with white and beautiful blossoms. Thus, "the hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness." Prov. xvi. 31. It is not uncommon to find beneath the hoary hairs a matured judgment and a virtuous mind, communicating such advices to youth and other classes, who solicit the favor, which seldom fail to produce advantages more valuable to

those who receive them, than the pleasure which the snow white blossoms of the almond tree afford to the sight.

Notwithstanding this, Solomon assures us, that the grasshopper shall be a burden; for light and trifling as this little insect may appear, when leaping upon an infirm aged person, yet it incommodes him, and creates a very unpleasant sensation.

Certainly we must conclude, that the chief design of the inspired writer was to show, by the emblem of the grasshopper, the inconveniences of the most trifling incident to infirm old age, both to the body and to the mind; and which is so true in the history of the aged, that it produces its own testimony, and only gives us leave to assign the cause, and indulge a few reflections. By increase of years, and the gradual decay of animal nature, the nervous system becomes relaxed; the spirits, like the sap of the tree in autumn, imperceptibly declines; of course, the temper and the passions are more easily touched, and not unfrequently irritable. He that once could bear the load and pressure of affliction with fortitude and composure, now in age bends as the bruised reed, and finds the trifles of the day a burthen to the spirits. Allowance must be made for the general texture of the mind, and the tone of temper through life, for while some men have cultivated an easy affable disposition, and are not soon angry under the disappointments and untoward occurrences in the world, others have a contrary spirit, are incapable of self-government, and become a

vexatious burden in their last days. Who does not know that a discontented, peevish, fretful old man, appears as though his head and breast were covered with grasshoppers; and although they may be little or no burden to himself, it never fails to discompose the family around him. So true is the statement of Montaigne, that wrinkles in an old man's face are honorable, but wrinkles upon the mind and temper are unworthy a venerable old age.

The difference between such a person and that of an aged Christian, is very great. The good old man in common with others, meets with his disappointments, neglects, temptations, bodily infirmities, and various other afflictions; but the grace and the word of his God teach him to consider the whole as proceeding from the mercy and loving-kindness of his God.

While under the pressure of his burden, he recollects the number and aggravations of his sins, the multitude of his imperfections, together with the innumerable mercies which he has received from his Lord; those combined have a tendency to alleviate his sorrows, and prompt him, with Paul, to call them "light afflictions," in comparison with those which he justly deserves. It is very observable in such a person, that, if on any occasion, these vexations should for a moment discompose his temper, so far is he from indulging in the impropriety of feeling them a burden, that he makes an estimate whether, of his real or imaginary troubles, they are of any more value



or consequence than that of a *Grasshopper*. Upon the whole, we may venture to affirm, that if the grasshopper be a burden, he is at the same time a sort of instructor to the aged. It teaches him those lessons of infirmities, submission, and patience, unknown to him in the earlier stages of life. One consideration, however, is enlivening to the aged Christian, and has certainly a great tendency to raise his drooping feelings, should he, like the Israelites, live where the gigantic sons of Anak dwell; or should he occasionally tread the field of affliction where Solomon's grasshoppers abound, he knows that he shall in the same manner quit the ground. As his hope is solely founded upon his Saviour's grace, he stands as upon a rock, and with the telescope of faith, looks forward to a state of freedom and unutterable bliss! where no annoyance of animal pains, infirmity of mind, or the more baneful powers of sin exist, and the days of his mourning shall be ever at an end. Yes—

There is a land of pure delight,  
Where saints immortal reign;  
Infinite day excludes the night,  
And pleasures banish pain.

## OLD AGE YET IN BLOOM.

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“THEY SHALL BRING FORTH FRUIT IN OLD AGE.”—PSALM XCII. 14.

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“At even-tide there will be light,  
O yes, a radiance heavenly bright,  
Beams from the brow of pious age;  
At the close of life still holier grown,  
Some saintly presence there we own,  
Too pure for earthly pilgrimage.”

THE history of old age seldom meets with that attention which it deserves. Perhaps the subject is tasteless to the young, while those employed in the busy scenes of life find a disinclination to indulge a passing thought on those who have penetrated into the vale of years. There is indeed a disposition, generally cultivated in men, to study the history of those of their own age in preference to that of others. For the same reason we may venture to indulge a pretty strong presumption, that aged persons themselves are peculiarly fond of hearing, reading, or inquiring concerning the life, infirmities, and habits of those who bear nearly the same

date of years with themselves. Besides, we know that the history of mankind in general presents a variety of classes according to their age, education, habits, station, and pursuits. And if we are disposed to select the aged after having numbered their seventy years, and divide this class according to their diversity of character, the wise, the thoughtless, the wicked, and the virtuous, they will not fail to afford us some lessons of useful instruction.

It is well known that while a great proportion of those who are advanced in years lose the strength and use of intellect, somewhat like leaves falling from the branches in autumn, we read of, or see very few others who exhibit old age yet in bloom, preserving their mental faculties to the final period of their earthly existence. A pretty correct estimate of the longevity of mankind has been made on the scale of one thousand persons born into the world. From this it appears that only thirty of that number live to seventy years, or three in one hundred. Now, if this estimate be correct, and we allow for the failure of mental powers after the age of seventy; how few indeed are there that preserve their intellect and faculties unbroken unto extreme old age, whether their character be good or evil. I may take leave to say, that in the vegetable part of our world, among the vast variety of trees which bear their fruit for the service of man, there are few which bear a resemblance to those aged persons who preserve their minds unimpaired to the last. For it is well known that to fruit trees in

general, there is an appointed season ; first to produce their blossoms, and afterwards their fruit ; and then their branches are stripped of foliage and laid bare until the returning season of spring. The trees to which I may allude as most emblematic of an intelligent very aged man, is the Cocoa-nut, which grows in the East and West Indies, for it bears a constant succession of blossoms and fruit at the same time ; and so likewise do the Orange and Lemon. So that the vegetable kingdom aids our contemplation of mankind, and leads us to adore the manifold wisdom of the Almighty in the various works of his hand.

It has frequently been observed, that in a few instances, only the intellectual powers in man have been the latest to decline, and have even retained their vigor in the decrepitude of age. Such persons can still devise new plans, correct the judgment of others, and derive a large share of gratification from religious studies and the circles of science ; so that it may be said of them, that the wilderness of old age "blossoms as the rose." The celebrated Neckar of France, when in great age, was in the habit of saying, "The era of three score and ten, is an agreeable age for writing ; the mind has not lost its vigor, and envy leaves you in peace." The remark of La Mothe le Vayer is very remarkable, and shows the strength and vigor of his mind at a very advanced age. "I should," said he, "but ill return the favors God has granted me in the eightieth year of my age, should I allow myself to give way to that shameless want of occupation,

which I have pursued all my life;" and then the old man grasped his pen, and proceeded to write those excellent observations on the composition and the reading of books, for the use of students. It is likewise remarked of Isaac Walton, that his literary talents still glowed while writing some of the most interesting biographies in his eighty-fifth year; and in his ninetieth year he enriched the poetical department with an admirable piece of poetry. The highly polished and virtuous sentiments of such men, combined with their literary excellence, teach us that the powers of human intellect have been and are yet capable of being preserved in full bloom even in the frosts of old age.

The preservation of the mind and the powers of the body in so good a state, amidst the other infirmities, generally incident to the last stages of human life, must certainly be attributed to the good pleasure of our beneficent Creator. Still we cannot but indulge an impression, that there are certain habits which, if pursued, have a tendency to aid in the preservation of the faculties to so late a period of life. Temperance and regularity of living, the cultivation of an easy affable temper, a due proportion of air and exercise, a correct method of study, by which the mental faculties are kept in active exercise, so that while sluggish habits are avoided, neither is the mind impaired by over exertion. The man who pursues such a placid and even course of life, even should he live to see old age, he will certainly enjoy more personal satisfaction in his pursuits, and promise better fruit in his labors,

than those who spend their days without such discipline. For we all know whatever creates a friction in a wheel impedes its motion, and eventually renders the whole machine useless. These observations, therefore, may be applied to all classes of men in active life, whether they have been in the pursuit of literature, in public life, or engaged in the concerns of business.

We will now introduce the names, and a short record of a few eminent individuals, whose intellect was preserved in bloom and fruitfulness in various departments of learning, science, and religion, to a very late period; exemplifying the observations made in these pages, not only verifying, but illustrating the goodness and power of the Almighty both in nature and in grace. They also may afford advice and encouragement to those who are about to bid adieu to the transitory scenes of time, and are looking forward to those more glorious realities which are eternal in the heavens. In this selection, impartiality, whether of nation or religious denomination, will be observed; some being selected from the *Scriptures*, others from the biography of individuals who lived in *Europe* and *America*.

#### SCRIPTURE.

MOSES, the servant of the Lord, who delivered the people of Israel out of their bondage, and led them through the wilderness, lived 120 years; and although he passed through a most laborious life, it is written

of him in Deuteronomy xxxiv. 7, that his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated. So strong were the powers of his mind, that he performed all his public duties with the greatest precision, by governing this refractory people, rehearsing to them the laws of their God, and giving them the most ample directions for their conduct on entering the land of Canaan. And certainly we must affirm, that while the intellectual powers of this great man were preserved to the last for accomplishing the purposes of God in favor of the Israelites, under such laborious duties and extreme vexations, preserving the meekness of his temper and the fortitude of his mind, he presents us a character most honorable to God, and worthy our most profound admiration.

JOHN THE DIVINE, recorded in the New Testament, lived to a very great age. He was the youngest of the Apostles of Jesus, and survived them all. In reading his life and his epistles, written in his old age, we must perceive the strength of his mind, and the force of truth and warmth of love which he retained to his ninety-fifth year. And although the Lord spared his life, and the strength of his intellect, enriching him with the influences of his Holy Spirit, enabling him to write on such interesting and momentous subjects to so late a period of human life; still it is no argument against the strength and fertility of his natural intellect; for in God we live, move, and have our being; let the time of our life, and the degree of our faculties

be what they may. And thus it becomes every aged person to acknowledge their gratitude to the Lord their God for all the blessings, temporal and spiritual, they receive and are permitted to enjoy in the evening of life.

### EUROPE.

**WILLIAM HEY, Esq.** An eminent surgeon, late of Leeds, in Yorkshire, and member of the Royal College of Surgeons in London. He was a man of exalted piety, filling up his days in Christian duties, both in public and private, and was a true friend of all who loved the name of the Lord Jesus and departed from iniquity, what ever their religious creed. His acts of charity were extensive, and his exertions to educate and moralize the children of the poor were very great. He preserved both his character and intellect in full bloom, till the eighth-third year of his age, when he breathed his last in the bosom of his Saviour, rejoicing in hope of the glory of God, and honored beyond most men of his time.

**Dr. BEILBY PORTEUS,** Lord Bishop of London, died in his seventy-eighth year. He was a man of excellent talents; in his official duties he was energetic in checking the vices of the great, and improving the morals of the poor. His printed works are contained in six volumes octavo. He was a strenuous advocate for abolishing the slave trade; and by his influence



great improvements were made in the instruction of the negroes in the West Indies. He was a most zealous friend and liberal patron of various religious and charitable institutions; and as an evidence among others, that he preserved his intellect and his piety to the last, a little before he expired, he earnestly prayed for their prosperity, and then thanked God for their progress, and prayed for their more extensive usefulness. He was the warm friend and patron of the celebrated Hannah More.

**Dr. JOHN GILL.** This evangelical divine was pastor of a Baptist Church at Southwark, adjoining London. He was a great student in biblical literature; a man who well understood the doctrine of the grace of God, and published a great number of works on divinity and various critical productions. His Commentary on the Old and New Testaments was printed in nine volumes, folio; and his Body of Divinity in three volumes, quarto, besides several other works. He could read very small print by candle-light, without the aid of glasses, which he never used to the last period of his life. Strict religious piety, probity, and virtue, adorned his private and public conduct from his youth to green old age. The powers and vigor of his intellect so far from being impaired by his long course of intense study, were preserved without the least failure to the very last, and he died in composure and in peace with God and man, in the seventy-fourth year of his age.

The name of Sir CHRISTOPHER WREN is introduced here, as having been an eminent astronomer and mathematician at the University at Oxford, and afterwards one of the most accomplished architects in Europe. His intellectual vigor was preserved to a remarkable degree until a late period in life. He was elected a fellow of the Royal Society, and was constituted surveyor general to his majesty's works. According to an account in the Biographical Dictionary, besides his erection of the monument in London, and fifty-three parish churches, many of which now stand as memorials of his great skill; he built the Custom House, Chelsea Hospital, and many other public edifices. All these are of great magnitude, and stand as monuments of his great skill, and objects of admiration to foreigners who visit England. In the eightieth year of his age, having completed the arduous repairs of St. Paul's Cathedral in London, in order to answer some private purpose, he was ungenerously dismissed from office to give place to another, who soon proved himself incompetent. This act of ingratitude, at so late a period of life, must, unquestionably, have painfully affected him. But, his biographer states, that in his character and deportment, "he was modest, devout, strictly virtuous, and very communicative of what he knew." Such a man was indeed a valuable member of society, an ornament to the arts, and the pride of his country. His faculties were preserved to very old age, he having departed this life at the advanced period of ninety-one years.

**ROBERT RAIKES, Esq.** died in the seventy-fifth year of his age, in the full possession of all his rational faculties. He was a man of opulence, great piety, and extensive benevolence. One of the first objects which excited his compassion, was the forlorn state of unfortunate prisoners who were confined for small debts; to many of whom he imparted relief, to the comfort and joy of their destitute families. His commiseration was excited for other miserable objects in prison, who were under confinement for petty offences, to whom he gave religious instruction, relieving their temporal wants; and to those who were penitent he procured means of liberation. But his good name will be chiefly handed down to posterity for having been the projector of the plan in favor of poor destitute and vagrant children who were found in the streets on the Lord's day. To him belongs the honor of first projecting a Sunday school, the success of which was so abundantly blessed, that similar schools soon were found in all the cities and towns of England, and America followed the example. How bright and cheering was the death-bed of this good man! What a glorious inheritance among the saints in light will surely be his!

**The Reverend JOHN NEWTON.** The early part of this extraordinary man's life was so strongly marked with events, particularly in relation to his voyages to Africa, and employments while there, that the narrative, written by himself, has been read with great

interest. The evidence of God's grace in changing his heart and character is still more astonishing! that of such a man, so wicked, so abandoned, should be produced the most humble Christian, and so useful and celebrated a minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. His Letters, and other publications, especially his Hymns, in connexion with those of Cowper, have enjoyed an extraordinary degree of popularity with Christians of all denominations. Although he was a conscientious minister of the Church of England, still he was at the same time full of charity and kindness towards all others who loved the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. His labors in the ministry were abundant, and almost beyond example; and his popularity, his usefulness, and his mental faculties, were preserved to the very last. He was born July 21, 1725, and died in peace, December 21, 1807. Aged 82 years.

#### AMERICA.

PETER WILSON, LL. D. This gentleman was upwards of thirty years an eminent professor of the Latin and Greek languages in Columbia College, city of New-York. He was a man of true piety, and a lover of all those who feared and served the Lord God in Christ Jesus. As time would admit from his professional duties, he evidenced to the fullest extent, the excellence of his Christian character, by aiding and promoting every plan calculated to relieve the indigent, instruct the ignorant, and reclaim the vicious

and unfortunate. It was not until he arrived at the seventy-fifth year of his age, in the latter end of 1821, that he retired from his laborious duties in college, to enjoy that repose in private life which is desirable in the last stage of human existence. Even then, while resident in the city, he employed himself in acts of good will and kindness until he removed to Hackensack, where he closed the remnant of his useful days. For some years Dr. Wilson found it requisite to use glasses, but for fifteen years his sight was so restored, that without such aid, he could read the smallest print. His mental faculties were preserved in full power and vigor to the very last; his hope in Christ was firm and unfailling; and the cheerful prospect of immortality and glory sustained and enlivened his final hours. While in his garden he was suddenly taken with a complaint, which, in five days, terminated his earthly course, August 1, 1825, in the seventy-ninth year of his age.

The Reverend JOHN H. LIVINGSTON, D. D. This amiable Christian and evangelical minister was born at Poughkeepsie, in the state of New-York, May 20, 1746. Having finished his classical studies in the twentieth year of his age, in the year 1766, he went to Amsterdam in Holland, to pursue his theological studies; and there, on the fifth of June, 1769, he received his licence as a preacher of the Gospel. On September third, the following year, he returned to his native country, America, and was received by the

Reformed Dutch Church in New-York, as one of its ministers, and was abundantly useful in the variety of his public labors. In the year 1784, he was appointed by the synod professor of theology, and had for many years a number of pious young men under his care designed for the ministry. In the year 1810, the providence of God called Dr. Livingston to New Brunswick to take the presidency of Queen's College, and the professorship of theology, occasionally preaching the Gospel. As a proof of the strength of his mind in old age, and to the very last, on the day preceding his death, he delivered his lecture in course to his theological students in college with peculiar animation. In the evening, at his own house, he conversed with his friends with the most agreeable freedom; and after having performed the usual devotions in his family, he retired to his chamber in apparent good health. Not answering to the usual call in the morning to breakfast, on entering his room, he was found dead in his bed, having died, it is presumed, without a struggle, as no part of the bed-clothes were in the least discomposed, and his countenance perfectly natural. He exchanged this mortal life for life eternal, January 30, 1825, in the seventy ninth year of his age, having been in the ministry of the Gospel nearly fifty-six years.

His Excellency JOHN JAY. The active life of this distinguished gentleman is well known upon the page of American history. From his well known attach-

ment to the independence and liberties of his country, and a persuasion of the ample abilities he possessed, he was appointed to some of the most important and responsible offices. In the year 1778, he was elected president of Congress. In the following year, 1779, he was invested with diplomatic powers, and sent minister to Spain. In 1781 he was appointed one of the commissioners to treat of peace with Great Britain. In 1784 Congress appointed Mr. Jay secretary for foreign affairs, and in the year 1789 he was appointed chief-justice of the Supreme Court of the United States. And in the year 1794, he was again appointed minister to the Court of Great Britain. In the year 1795 he was elected governor of his native State of New-York, which office he filled until the year 1801, when finding the infirmities of age advancing, he retired from the public scenes of life to his country-seat at Bedford, with the intention of enjoying repose, and to spend the remainder of his days in the bosom of a happy family. In the year 1821 he was elected president of the American Bible Society, which he declined accepting from convictions of duty. He however made the society an ample donation in lieu of his personal services. In his retirement he exhibited an example worthy of imitation; employing himself in acts of kindness and charity, at the same time aiding in every good work of benevolence. In every domestic relation he fulfilled the duties of the father and the exemplary Christian, enjoying the pleasing reflections arising from a conscientious discharge of every duty.

But the chief employment of his devout mind was like Job, "waiting all the days of his appointed time until his final change should come;" and in which the Bible was his guide and his companion. His flesh and heart gradually failed, and when the final hour came, although palsied and helpless in body, still his mind was calm and perfectly collected, his hope in the Saviour serene and unclouded, and he gently breathed his last in the bosom of his everlasting Father, at the great age of 84 years.

Innumerable examples of a similar description to the few here mentioned, might be given to illustrate the power of faith in the believer's heart, but my limits will not permit a record of more than those I have given. And yet I cannot forbear in this place, to name a few of the other sex, who have by their lives and conduct proved an honor and a blessing to their fellow-creatures, exemplifying the truth of our subject, that old age may not only bloom with beauty and fragrance but bear abundant fruit, even to the last period of human life. The names of Mrs. Elizabeth Carter and Hannah More in England, and of Mrs. Isabella Graham of this city, I will alone mention here in illustration; and most earnestly would I recommend the published memoirs of these bright ornaments of their sex, to the study and perusal of my aged readers, confident that lessons of the highest value will be derived from them.

In conclusion, let me entreat my aged reader, most



earnestly to pray that he may abound in the fruits of righteousness, to the honor and glory of God, and the good of his fellow-creatures. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest." Then shalt thou bloom even in old age, and "thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in its season." Amen.

"Bright autumn's golden skies must fade  
And autumn's fruits decay,  
And soon 'mid snows and storms must come  
Old age's wintry day;  
A wintry day, at best—as short,  
As gloomy, and as cold,  
Till the worn body yields at last,  
And life lets go its hold."

BISHOP DOANE.



# THE LONG HOME OF MAN.

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MAN GOETH TO HIS LONG HOME.—ECCLES. xii. 5.

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————— that home of man,  
Where dwells the multitude ; we gaze around ;  
We read their monument ; we sigh ; and while  
We sigh, we sink ; and are what we deplored ;  
Lamenting, or lamented, all our lot ! ”

YOUNG.

SOLOMON was endowed with wisdom from the Almighty, far transcending the wisest men of his time. He minutely investigated the various characters, maxims, dispositions, and employments of mankind of every possible class and description ; and he has left us his book of Proverbs, that golden mine of wisdom, as a valuable directory for the government of our thoughts, words, and actions in all that relates to private or public life. In his advanced age, this wise man became more aware of the unsatisfactory nature of all sublunary enjoyments, and habitually directed the powers of his mind to the scenes of mortality, and

the certainty of a future state of existence beyond the vale of death. He has left us the result of his matured reflections, as an invaluable legacy in his book, bearing the name of "Ecclesiastes," or, "The Words of the Preacher, the Son of David, the King of Jerusalem." After all this great man had seen and heard; and after all he had written upon the subject of human nature, the only stamp he could fix upon its variety and greatness, was, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity;" and then closes the tale of life, and of old age, by saying, "man goeth to his long home;" and the little testimony of respect left behind him is, "that the mourners go about the street."

Yes, my hearers, man goeth to his long home. Solemn fact! Were it not for the thoughtlessness of mortals, it need not have been recorded. Whether you, or I, may leave survivors to shed a tear, and lament our departure, to us will be very immaterial. We receive constant admonitions, that as sure as we are on the journey of life, so sure we must eventually arrive at our long home. Let it therefore be a subject of your frequent meditation, and you will find, that so far from its militating against either your real pleasures, or your active pursuits, it will correct your desires, inspire your confidence, aid in cultivating your social affections, and excite your zeal to serve your generation by the will of God; never failing to convince you of the vast importance of the Lord preparing you to meet your final change. As all these subjects are of the highest importance, I will now

attempt to assist your reflections upon the words of my text.

I. It is easy for you to be persuaded, that whatever may be a man's station, or occupation upon earth, or whether he has none, he has a home to go to at last, which properly may be called *his own*; and that home is the grave.

II. It is equally true, that for whatever period of time a person may have enjoyed a residence in other habitations, the grave is emphatically called "his long home."

III. As the crowds of mankind in their various grades and circumstances, are travelling the beaten road to death, it is indispensably necessary for you to determine in what character *you* are now *going* to your long home. May the sensible presence of that great Redeemer who died upon the cross, entered the grave, abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light by the gospel: may he direct our reflections, and finally conduct us to our long home in peace!

I. The first sentiment is, that every man has a home to go to, which properly may be called his own, whether he be rich or poor; and that home is the grave. Of this Job had the strongest assurance, "I know that thou wilt bring me to death; and to the

house appointed for all living." If Job knew nothing else, he was taught this lesson by the sudden death of his sons and his daughters; by the acute diseases of his own person, and the extremity and depth of his afflictions. But why is this gloomy house, the grave, prepared for all human beings? Can the Almighty delight in demolishing the exquisitely noble fabric of the body, and for no wise purpose, cause it to be laid in the recess of corruption? The reply is at hand. "By sin came death." In consequence of this, "It is appointed unto all men, once to die." This confirms the original sentence upon our race, "Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return." The grave therefore may properly be called man's home, a dwelling-place assigned him in the dust of the earth, as the just and unavoidable consequence of his transgressions against the law of his Maker. Let us for a moment stoop down and contemplate this habitation prepared for the dead.

Man's long home is of very narrow dimensions; its length and breadth, just sufficient to receive his single corpse, and no more. Whatever our present dwellings may afford in air or warmth, our house in the dust will be as cold as the dead body that shall occupy it. The warming rays of the sun cannot penetrate the depth of earth, and reach this recess of the dead. Our dwellings upon earth may be situated amidst surrounding neighbors, and endearing friends, with whom we enjoy the most charming and interesting intercourse; but while this forms one of the

greatest luxuries of human life, let it be remembered, that whether we be buried at the foot of a solitary mountain, or in a grave-yard, where thousands have been deposited, they are all equally silent, and all conscious intercourse is lost. There the rich and the poor meet together. "Kings and counsellors of the earth; princes that had gold; infants that never saw the light; the wicked that were troublers of society, and the weary heavy laden who were borne down by the weight of affliction; the small and the great: all these alike, lie silent and are quiet in the dust." What is still more calculated to mortify the pride of the living is, that this habitation of the grave is in the highest state of putrefaction. Whatever beauty or strength the body may have possessed in youth or manhood, instantly as life expires, corruption and dishonor commences; so that on the death of the most endeared relative, we are compelled to say with Abraham, "bury my dead out of my sight." When we reflect upon the dissolution of the flesh, its dismemberment from its bones, and the multitude of worms covering and gnawing its remains: this indeed presents the grave as an house of corruption, truly appalling! How strongly did Job, in the midst of his afflictions, describe this noisome abode. "If I wait," said he, "the grave is mine house; I have said to corruption, Thou art my father; to the worm, Thou art my mother, and my sister." Relatives these, which we must all embrace in the grave. For "though one dieth in his full strength, and another in the bitterness

of his soul : they shall lie down alike in the dust, and the worms shall cover them." What a stab does this representation of the grave give to pride and human grandeur ! Let a man live in the most sumptuous palace, and be clothed with purple and fine linen ; or should he dwell in the most lowly hut, and be clothed with rags : still when he shall enter his last home, his bed will inevitably be corruption, and his covering of worms. Were not this view as true as it is humiliating, my feelings would have recoiled, and my hand refused to write it down. But the solemn truth cannot be denied. Permit me to add yet another description of this house of clay. We all know that "light is precious, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun." To this end it is, we construct our habitations in the most desirable form, that light may at once illuminate and cheer us. Not so the mansions of the dead. Here no ray of light penetrates, and the dead are sealed in perpetual darkness. It is a "land of darkness, as darkness itself, without any order, and where the light is as darkness." Job x. 21, 22.

"For in the silent grave, no conversation,  
No joyful tread of friends, no voice of lovers,  
No careful father's counsel—nothing 's heard,  
For nothing is, but all oblivion,  
Dust, and a total darkness.

Death projects his shadow ; light of every description is excluded, and the tenant of this long home is



wrapped in thick darkness, until **HE**, who is “the resurrection and the life,” shall summon the sleeping dust to awake to everlasting life and joy; or, to shame and never-ending contempt. This reflection admonishes me to pursue our subject by——

**II.** Showing you that, for whatever period of time a person may have enjoyed a residence in other habitations, the grave is emphatically called, “his long home.” Let me assign a few more reasons, why the grave is called man’s long home. To many it certainly is so by anticipation. Natural indeed is it to man, to view death at the greatest possible distance. In the season of youth, this is still more habitual. Alive to all the pleasures of sense, and realizing to themselves a thousand enjoyments in private and social life: the young are induced to calculate upon a journey of threescore years before they shall arrive at the mansions of the dead. By this precarious reckoning, their final exit from the shifting scenes of time, appears at so remote a distance, as seldom to induce a serious thought! But how frequent are the instances in which youth, in all its beauty and bloom, is unexpectedly arrested by disease and death! True it is, “man cometh up as a flower, and is cut down.” Let these reflections seriously impress every thoughtless mind, and stamp upon it that valuable admonition; “Hear counsel, and receive instruction, that thou mayest be wise in thy latter end.” Prov. xix. 20. It is not merely youth, who are chargeable with this

disregard of their latter end; it is equally so with too many in maturity of age, surrounded with the objects and cares of busy life, they possess so strong an attachment to the things of the world from which they cannot bear the idea of parting, that they seldom have leisure or inclination to direct a thought towards the grave, except perhaps occasionally, when they join the sable train of mourners, who "go about the street," to pay their last token of respect to the remains of a departed relative or friend. It is with regret we are compelled to say, that too many aged persons are equally indifferent and unconcerned, and regard their latter end at as remote a period as possible. The labor and admonitions of sixty years, so far from impressing them with an assurance that they are drawing nigh to their journey's end, finds them attached to earthly enjoyments as the young and careless. We may conclude from the different stages and pursuits of men, that there is a disposition in all, more or less, to procrastinate the view of death and the grave, because to them the home is long distant, and that it will be time enough to contemplate it at some future period.

We will indulge still another reflection upon the long home of man. While associated with our fellow beings upon earth, a man may take up his abode in a habitation, either by inclination or fancy; often removing from one house to another, as the year passes round. Or, he may dwell in the house in which he was born, occupying it to the latest period of a long

life. Still what is all this, when compared to that habitation, in which man shall dwell in his grave as his long home? For instance, Abel, murdered by his brother Cain, as the first fruit of death, in the year of the world 129, has laid in his grave 5098 years. The first man Adam, died in his 930th year; and has occupied his long home, 4897 years. As this subject is of serious importance, we will attempt to form a calculation for ourselves, how long any of us shall inhabit our long home in the dust, on the supposition that we should die the present year, one thousand eight hundred and twenty-nine?

This estimate can only be formed from what we may collect from the Scriptures, concerning the duration of the world. The necessary clue to this, is the time and order in which creation was first produced; and the gradual periods marked in the providence of God, in future successive ages. Sufficient therefore to say, that the time God employed to form the world, is a directory to us to calculate its continuance. In *six* days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, with all their rich variety of productions; and on the *seventh* he rested from his labors, blessed the day as his sabbath, and sanctified it as a perpetual memorial to his creatures throughout all succeeding generations. The same scale of *seven*, was afterwards extended to the Hebrew nation, by first producing their *seventh*, or sabbatical year of rest; and afterwards, by the same number multiplied into itself, making forty-nine, introduced the fiftieth as

the grand Jubilee, or year of release and liberty. A person who understood his Bible, need not be told, that the perfect number *seven*, is invariably used to distinguish not only subjects, but judgments and mercies, which the Almighty has, and will make known upon the face of the earth. We are assured "that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day;" and, it is very observable, that St. Peter makes this assertion, when describing the end of the world. 2 Peter iii. On this more extensive scale we may reckon the days of creation as *thousands*, which will lead us to this estimate. The old Testament dispensation was completed in *four thousand years*; and which was the fulness of time, when God sent forth his Son Jesus to redeem and to save. We are now in the New Testament era of *two thousand years*, which is nearly elapsed; and is analogous to the *six days* labor of creation. Then cometh the *seventh*, or last *thousand years* as the final sabbath, to usher in a vast and glorious eternity! Of the commencement and continuance of this thousand years of sabbath, the New Testament gives us the following account; particularly by comparing the fourth chapter of the first Epistle to the Thessalonians, thirteenth to eighteenth verses, with the twentieth chapter, first to sixth verses, of Revelation. The first event will be the binding of Satan, and his confinement in the bottomless pit for a thousand years. The dead in Christ shall then rise, and they shall live and reign

with Christ a thousand years; this is the first resurrection. The rest of the dead lived not until the thousand years were ended, and which is called the second death. From this statement, and perhaps no other more correct can be proposed, we may easily make our intended estimate. Those of you who shall die in Christ this year, must occupy your long home in the grave 177 years, which will complete the present two thousand, and produce the first resurrection. Therefore, should any of you unhappily die in your sins, without hope in Christ, you must remain in the prison of the grave till the expiration of the thousand years, making from the present date, 1177 years, when the last trumpet of God shall be sounded, and summon you to appear in eternal judgment. Solemn thought! may it awaken the attention of every careless reader. After all that has been said of the grave as the long home of human beings, let it be most seriously remembered, that this is the receptacle of the body only. For in the seventh verse of the twelfth chapter of Ecclesiastes, you are informed, "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." Let us now—

III. Take a look at the crowd of human beings, possessing a variety of characters, each on their journey to their long home. This is the more necessary, as it leads the reader to examine with the more serious earnestness, and determine in what

character you mingle with the throng, and are going to your long home. The diversity of human characters, unquestionably admit of the most extensive variety; whether in themselves, in the sight of God, and of man. Perhaps I may be justified in morally reducing them into the three following classes. Thoughtless practical sinners of a carnal mind, "who live in the world without God, without Christ, and without hope," Eph. ii. 12., regardless of death and eternity. Those who wear the garment of religion, without a renewal of the heart, and bear no good fruit to the honor of God, or the benefit of mankind. Prov. xxx. 12. Those also of a contrary character who "worship God in the spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh; being made free from sin, and become servants to God, they have their fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life." Phil. iii. 3; Rom. vi. 22. As every man's character is produced partly from education, and partly from principles within him, and both form the man, agreeably to our Lord's invariable rule, "By their fruit ye shall know them," from the three characters I have named, the reader is left to derive some information concerning his own. Conscience is a faithful monitor; and the grace of God, in whom it may reside, never leaves the possessor altogether in uncertainty; therefore it is your imperious duty by prayer, and reading the Word of God, to seek the light of truth to shine upon the heart, in order to determine if indeed it be right with God; without

which, every thing else attached to us, must be fatally wrong. You cannot but be persuaded, that this subject will form a strong excitement to self-examination, both of principle and practice. And notwithstanding what has already been written, there is one word in Solomon's statement, which, if duly examined, would produce a most solemn impression upon your mind. He represents man in continued MOTION to mortality—he *goeth*. Always on the advance, however employed, awake, or asleep; the current of time, which admits of no ebb, incessantly bears him forward, without stopping a single moment, or giving him leave to retrace a single step which he has trodden. From these serious reflections, let me once more urge the reader to propose to himself the interesting question—HOW AM I GOING TO MY LONG HOME? I might here make a recapitulation of what I have written, and close this paper; but as Solomon has a strong reference to two opposite, and distinct classes of persons, I will offer a short address to each of them.

**THE FIRST IS YOUTH.** Solomon had been long a traveller on the road to his long home; and having been an attentive observer of human nature, he knew that "childhood and youth are but vanity." For this reason, he has interspersed so many maxims and warnings to youth in his book of Proverbs; and in his after age, in the close of the book of Ecclesiastes: that he addresses them again in a manner calculated

to claim their attention. "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eye: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment." Chap. xi. 9. This is not to be considered as giving them liberty to pursue a course of folly, sin, and profligacy: but as it were ironically warning them against a thoughtless, wicked course of conduct, and to impress them with the solemn and awful assurance, that, after death comes the judgment. He then proceeds to give them the most important and salutary advice. "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them." Chap. xii. 1. And then as a reason, "for man goeth to his long home; and the mourners go about the streets." These serious and interesting sentiments are addressed to youth. They are not intended to deprive them of any real or rational pleasures and enjoyment; but so to admonish and warn them, that they may strive to enrich the mind, and ennoble the soul. No young person can presume to believe, that youth is invulnerable against the dart of death; and that none such go to their long home, until ripened with old age. Impossible! How often is it seen that children in the bloom of youth, have been separated from their weeping parent's arms, by disease and death, and their lifeless remains consigned to the cold grave.



In what state of mind are you now treading the path of life? Are you as unmindful of your Creator, and Saviour, as you are thoughtless about the habitation of the dead? Would you be willing to depart this world like that young person of whom it is said, "His bones are full of the sin of his youth, which shall lie down with him in the dust?" Job xx. 11. Heaven forbid! May this be the favored hour, the time of love, when some rays of celestial light may shine upon your heart, and lead you to that blessed Redeemer, who alone can be the guide of your youth, and conduct you to your eternal home, and your portion forever.

THE OTHER IS OLD AGE. This last stage of human life, with its various infirmities, Solomon has described in this chapter by the most striking and just emblems. The *hands*, those once vigorous keepers of the house, tremble and are no longer capable of action; the strong men, the *legs* like pillars that supported the fabric, bow themselves, and sink beneath the weight. The *teeth*, the external grinders of the food, are worn down, and no longer capable of performing their proper office. The *eyes*, those windows which admitted the light to contemplate visible objects, grow dim, and the ear, which once received the melody of sound, refuses to admit the voice of the bird. So timorous is the whole frame, that the very *grasshopper* becomes a burden, and the most trifling incidents produce the most affecting

discomposure of the whole system. My aged reader, can any description more accord with your condition? And do not these perpetually admonish you that you are rapidly going to your long home? Why then so inconsiderate of your latter end, when one would be disposed to imagine, that you were ready to stretch forth your withering hand to grasp the knocker of the door of death, to gain admittance to your home of rest. It is deeply to be lamented, that a long life altogether spent in worldly pursuits; sinful habits strongly confirmed; a dread of death and judgment to come; these, aided by temptation, too frequently prevent a due consideration of your latter end. Try to estimate the years of your life; compare them with your present infirmities; and you must be convinced, that according to the usual course of nature, you cannot be far distant from your long home. Have you forgotten the scenes through which you have already passed; the temporal and religious privileges which you have enjoyed; the many distresses you have survived; the friends which you have lost, and are gone to their long home before you. To lay down in the dust the burden of old age, while the heart is a receptacle of every sin you have committed since you had a being, and your conscience bearing a faithful record of all your actions; and yet have no desire, no sense of a Saviour's pardoning mercy: how then in such a state, can you be ready to take your last step to the grave in peace? What an old age is this! ripe for death, but not for heaven! May that

blessed Redeemer, who taught aged Nicodemus by night, how a man might be born again "when he is old," in order to enter into the kingdom of heaven; may he instruct your mind, change your heart, and enrich you with his celestial grace, that although you may have arrived at "the eleventh hour," the remaining hour of your life may be crowned with peace, and spent in the most charming anticipation of eternal felicity.

I cannot but indulge the charming hope, that many pious aged readers, are patiently awaiting the hour which shall terminate their earthly journey. Frequently retrace the steps you have trodden; bring to remembrance the heat and burden of the day of sorrow which you have endured; the many passing scenes you witnessed: and especially will you derive the most charming satisfaction from the contemplation of the goodness and mercy of your heavenly Shepherd, which have followed you all the days of your life. About to finish your course, let your full faith rest upon the faithfulness, immutable promise, and everlasting love of your God and Father in Christ Jesus. And be assured, that it is from this source alone you can draw adequate consolation and support, to bear you up above the pangs of dissolving nature, and the fears of death. It is a charming thought for a child of God to cultivate, that the moment of his entering into his long home, is decreed by the hand of Him who died upon the cross to redeem his soul. This makes composure in old age, and forms an anodyne for

its numerous infirmities. While advancing to your grave, frequently indulge devout meditations on the burial of Jesus, who slept in the tomb, and blest the bed for you. But while that shall be the long home for the body, you are encouraged to look forward for "a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." There your disembodied soul shall dwell till the morning of the resurrection; for then "the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout; with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first, and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore, comfort one another with these words." 1 Thess. iv. 16-18. Amen.

## THE FAITHFUL LABORER OF CHRIST.

RETIRING TO REST ON THE BED OF DEATH.

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“ O that without a lingering groan,  
I may the welcome word receive ;  
My body, with my charge lay down,  
And cease at once to work and live.”

C. W.

SOLOMON, the king of Israel, was a wise observer of the principles and actions of the various classes of the human family. The books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes contain the result of his observations, intermixed with a variety of maxims and wise reflections, which are designed to instruct the mind and regulate the conduct of all classes of mankind. Among others, he forms a correct contrast between the industrious laborer and the indolent voluptuary, and says, “The sleep of a laboring man is sweet, whether he eat little or much; but the abundance of the rich will not suffer him to sleep.” Eccles. v. 12. It is true, the anxious cares of an opulent life, and the indulgence of luxurious habits, create a spirit of indolence, which so sensibly affects and corrodes the senses, thereby depriving the

man of that balmy repose which is so necessary for the refreshment both of body and mind. Not so the industrious laborer, whether he eat little or much, for after having endured the fatigue of the day, he returns to his habitation, partakes of his homely repast with gratitude, retires to his bed of rest, enjoys the sweets of undisturbed sleep, and then arises in the morning with fresh vigor to meet the duties and the occupations of a new day.

As possibly, the reader of this paper may be an aged servant of the Lord Jesus in the vineyard of his Gospel, and knowing from my own case, how much he needs to be consoled and animated under his infirmities, to finish the labors of the day, I shall attempt to improve the sentiment of Solomon as descriptive of a faithful minister of Christ, anticipating the close of his labors upon earth, and longing for his repose upon the bed of death, in the cheering hope of awaking out of sleep on the bright morning of the resurrection to eternal joy.

According to the council and foreknowledge of God the Father in the redemption of man, he gave his Son Jesus Christ to be a substitute for the persons and guilt of his people; and who, by his obedience to the law, and the shedding of his blood as an atonement to justice, harmonized the divine perfections in their salvation. On his ascension to the right hand of his Father in glory, he received the promised gift of the Holy Spirit, by whose influence upon the persons of his redeemed, they are brought home to God in this

ife, and be habitually prepared for the inheritance of immortality and glory. The appointed means to accomplish this great work, is by preaching the truth of his Gospel, which, under the influence of the same Spirit, becomes the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. And it is the province of the exalted Son of God, the great Head of the Church, and Lord of the sacred harvest, to “give evangelists, pastors, and teachers,” for this great and blessed work; qualifying and sending them forth in every successive age, to labor in his vineyard by preaching the Gospel of his salvation; giving them the assurance for their strength and success, that “Lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.” The time of their call, the place for their labors, the variety of their duties, the degree of their success, as well as their continuance in his service, wholly depends upon the sovereign pleasure of their Lord and Master. Some of these ministers of God’s word receive talents more immediately designed for preaching the Gospel generally to a world of sinners, while others labor both in word and doctrine for the establishment and growth of the Church; and it is not always seen that a capacity for both these labors meet in the same person. I may venture to affirm, that a faithful minister is no stranger to the labors of the head, the hand, and the heart. Yes, the labor of the heart outweighs the rest. The frequent conflict in his own soul, his anxious concern for the honor of his God, and the purity of his truth; perplexity to know, and to perform his

special duties with diligence and faithfulness; the force of temptations from Satan, and discouragements from which none are exempt; his afflictions at home, his disappointments abroad, uniting with the evils of his own nature, all deeply affect and depress him. Ministers, however, are but laborers by the day. No man is sure of life; we cannot boast of to-morrow, for we know not what a day may bring forth. Some the Lord calls to his work early in life, at the *third* hour of the day; some at the *sixth* hour; others at the *ninth*; and others at the *eleventh* hour, just before the day closes. Matt. xx. But may I not from familiar facts employ this order, so as to designate also, the call of death to remove them from their labors? How many young men have we known, called at the third hour of the day to preach the gospel, who were enriched with talents, in the fragrant bloom of their profession, and promising the most abundant usefulness; when suddenly they were cut down by the hand of death and laid low in the dust! Others live to the sixth hour, the meridian of life and usefulness, and amidst the brightest prospects, are summoned away to the cold recess of the grave. Some are permitted to live to the ninth hour, the autumn of life, and the introduction to the winter of old age. Perhaps, upon an average, a greater number of ministers die about the age of *fifty*, than at any other time of life. How few indeed survive to the eleventh hour; and with their growing infirmities



continue to labor in the work of the Lord, and close their ministry and their lives together !

Should the reader be one of the Lord's laborers, he will not, it is hoped, be displeased with this short view of this subject ; at any rate, it may refresh his memory and excite his gratitude, for the forbearance and loving kindness of the Lord towards him for so great a length of years. Rest confidently on the promise of your Divine Master, that he will neither leave you, nor forsake you at the end of your journey ; but will increase your faith, fortitude, and patience ; so that when the time of your departure shall be at hand, you will seal your ministry by your last testimony, and look forward to that crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give in the last day unto all them that love his appearing. We will not therefore lose sight of the sentiment of Solomon ; that "the sleep of a laboring man is sweet ;" and many an aged, faithful laborer in the vineyard of Christ has found it so, and why not you ? Let us indulge upon it a few serious considerations, in the cheering hope of its proving a stimulant to our mutual hope and joy.

I. It is our felicity to know, that our Lord and Master has already prepared the bed of death, on which all his faithful laborers shall eventually rest. Jesus died on the accursed tree to atone for sin ; he was laid in the grave, and there unstung the monster death ; he arose triumphant from the tomb, and then

blest the bed for you. The quality of death is now changed; the penal-substance is removed; its shadow-like sleep only remains, and the curse is turned into a blessing. It is indeed a bed of rest without a thorn; and blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, that they may rest from their labors, and their works shall certainly follow them.

II. To a pious laborer, the bed of death is sweet in ANTICIPATION. It is the happiness of the ministers of the gospel to know for themselves, as well as to teach others, that our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who abolished death, hath also brought life and immortality to light by the gospel. To pass away to enjoy those pleasures which are at God's right hand for evermore, we know that of necessity we must first lay down our wearied bodies on the bed of death, that our flesh may rest in hope. Happy the man who thus habitually cherishes an anticipation of this solemn, yet delightful change! for then without fear, he may say, to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

III. It is also sweet in desire. Amidst the heat and burden of the day; borne down with fatigue, afflictions, and numerous discouragements: how refreshing is it for the laborer to believe, that his good Master has provided for him a bed of rest in death, where he shall lay down his cares and his body together! Under all such complicated sorrows, and while looking forward for the bliss of eternity, this

good man frequently exclaims like St. Paul, "I am in a strait between two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ which is far better ; nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you." Phil. i. 23, 25. Sweet the thought, and happy the assurance, to be with the Lord forever ! This never fails to add fresh strength for labor, and to continue the Lord's own time, to finish our work for the day, and wait for the evening shades to call us home.

IV. Undressing for the bed of death, however dark the chamber, is sweet employment. See the industrious, wearied laborer, in the twilight of evening returning home from his field ; he takes his refreshing food, and with composure enters into his sleeping room. Cool and deliberate, he lays his garments aside, reclines his wearied limbs upon his bed, and then gently falls asleep. So the laborer in the vineyard of Christ. His day's work is done ; the shadows of the evening call him to his long home ; his heavenly Master provides for him his last meal-time of the bread and water of life, cheering his heart with the cup of his salvation. He begins to undress, and put off the garments of this mortal body, with all their imperfections ; or, as St. Peter expresses it, "I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath showed me." Then committing himself body and soul into the hand of his Saviour, he bids adieu to all around him, and closes his eyes in the sleep of death.

V. The sweetest of all will be, the awaking out of sleep, and arising from the bed of death, on the morning of the resurrection. If after the fatigue of a day, we awake from the night of sleep, and arise refreshed, the scenes of nature put on new beauties, and salute our eyes: and we feel inspired with animation to perform our daily round of labor: then, O how charming and refreshing will it be on arising from the bed of death! How inconceivably great will be the rapture of the soul, when with new eyes we shall behold the innumerable and grand scenes of eternity? This vile body shall then be changed and fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body; the glorified soul shall then claim its once kindred clay, and both united, shall be received into that eternal rest of peace and blessedness, which remain for the people of God. David, in sublime devotion, anticipated a share in this sacred joy. "As for me," said he to his Lord, "I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness." Happy then the faithful laborer, who shall receive his Master's final plaudit—"Well done, thou good and faithful servant: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

## THE CHRISTIAN'S COURSE TERMINATED.

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"I have finished my course."—2 TIMOTHY iv. 7.

LIFE is the natural journey of man from his birth to his long home in the grave, and various are the characters, both good and evil, which human beings act while on the road; but all at last shall be aroused from the bed of death, to stand in judgment before their God. The Christian's life, however, is peculiar to itself. The course he pursues, and his final end, form a lesson the most interesting and invaluable. The text I have selected expresses the triumphant language of Paul, a detained prisoner at Rome by the cruel Nero, waiting the executioner's bloody hand to put him to death. A striking instance this of the influence of grace in producing the most serene composure and undaunted courage while the awful appendages of violent death were immediately before his eyes! Nor was this the sudden impulse of the mind on the exigency of the case. About five years before this, when he was at Miletus, he sent to Ephesus, and called for the elders of the church. To them he appealed as witnesses of his humility

and tears, of his temptations and sufferings, and of his fidelity in preaching repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. On that occasion he assured them, that although he was confident future bonds and afflictions awaited him, none of these things moved him; he counted not his life dear unto himself, so that he might finish his course with joy, and the ministry which he had received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God. Acts xx. After a lapse of time, it pleased God in his providence that St. Paul, for preaching the Gospel, should become a prisoner at Rome. While in his chains, believing that the time of his departure was at hand, he wrote this second Epistle to his beloved Timothy, to direct and animate him in the faithful discharge of his important duties in the church of Christ; at the same time, in order to prepare and console him on his hearing of the violent death which the apostle was to endure, he assured him of his confidence and joy in the following animated lines: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." While these assurances were admirably calculated to assuage the pangs of anguish in the breast of young Timothy, under the loss of Paul the aged, the sentiments themselves have often been verified in the last moments of many faithful servants of Jesus Christ, and still

remain a strong excitement to every aged Christian to perform his duty, and finish his course with joy.

The *commencement*, and the *progress* of the Christian's course, though subjects of the highest interest, are unnecessary to be introduced in this discourse, as they have been more or less explained in several of the essays comprised in this volume. Your attention therefore will be directed to the PERIOD OF THE CHRISTIAN'S COURSE, which is so solemnly described by St. Paul in the chapter out of which I have selected the text, and which possibly may form a suitable subject with which to close this work.

It is an observation made by some intelligent Christians, that no man's character can correctly be determined, until the last conflict approaches; and indeed our Saviour said, "He that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved." Death is the trying hour. For we know not how far a transgressor may wander in the paths of iniquity, and yet, by the grace of God, have his feet turned into the way of peace. So neither do we know how far a man may support a profession of religion, and afterwards throw off the mask, and end his days in shame and misery. Therefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. At the same time let us remember, that the Lord alone can preserve us unto his everlasting kingdom, and grant us grace to finish our course with joy. In order, therefore, to attain more correct views of the last testimony of

St. Paul's faith and confidence, more especially with a view to excite our own, let us examine the expression of his sentiments in connexion with the text.

Observe his admirable composure in the prospect of death, "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand." The certainty of the period of his life, "I have finished my course." The animating prospect which was presented before him, "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day." This is enhanced by the delightful anticipation, that multitudes of others who "love the appearance of the Lord Jesus," will share in the same honor and felicity. If the dying expressions of a departing saint are calculated to make the most salutary impressions upon survivors, then let us with solemn seriousness observe—

I. HIS COMPOSURE. Death is formidable to humanity. He is the last enemy to be destroyed. Though there be no discharge in this war, it may be truly affirmed, that the saint of God conquers when he falls, by the victory which God gives him through our Lord Jesus Christ. St. Paul, in the commencement of his course, gave himself up to the Lord as a convert and as an apostle, serving his Master with a willing mind and a devoted heart. He was not mistaken in his calculations of the afflictions he should endure; and in the history of his life we read of the many trials, bonds, and imprisonments, which



attended him, and that he was in deaths oft. Therefore in his view of Christ, in the temper of his mind, and in the firmness of his faith, he was habitually ready to suffer or die while pursuing his course, and in this calm and pleasing frame of mind he could say, "I die daily." Now, the time of his departure is at hand; the time, not to be annihilated, but to leave this transitory world by a violent death, and then to enjoy what he had so long desired, "to depart and be with Christ, which is far better," however good it was to serve his Lord on earth. In this sweet temper he assured Timothy he was ready to be offered, as in all probability his death warrant was about to be signed. This, however, did not produce a shade of discomposure; he was ready, not only for the bloody hands of Nero's executioners, but to pour out his blood like as the blood of the ancient sacrifice was poured out at the foot of the altar, a sacrifice to the honor and truth of his blessed Lord, and for the defence of his Gospel. Noble resolution! Happy servant of the most high God! May we also, whether in private or in public life, though not called to martyrdom, so realize our personal interest in Christ, that we may be ready when the time of our departure shall be at hand, and thus smile upon death in prospect of a glorious immortality!

II. Let us mark the conclusion of his life, for, says he, "I have finished my course." He had kept the very course of obedience and suffering marked out

and allotted him to pursue by his Lord and Master, and he had now arrived at the end of it. The number of his days was accomplished, and his last moments were expiring. He had no more discourses to deliver. The sound of his voice was no more to be heard in the assembly of the saints on earth. His heart was now dictating, and his hand writing, his last Epistle, as his dying memorial. The care of the poor, for whom he was so benevolently interested, he now leaves to the tender compassion of his God and Saviour; for the hand which had so often relieved their necessities was speedily to be grasped in death. He had no more battles to fight in defence of the Gospel against error, or in repelling the infernal foe; the more painful conflicts between nature and grace, flesh and spirit, in his own breast, were now ending with his course for ever. So true is that saying in first Kings xx. 11, "let not him that girdeth on his harness boast himself as he that putteth it off;" for certainly, it is one thing to boast on putting on the harness of the Gospel, whether as a Christian or as a minister, and another to put it off with honor when the course is finished, the contest ended, and the head crowned with victory.

III. The animating prospect which was presented to St. Paul while under the expectation of a bloody death, next demands your most devout attention. "Henceforth," said he, "there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous

Judge, shall give me at that day." The object was a crown. This was not formed of laurels, as if he had won an earthly race, nor of gold enriched with jewels, expressive of worldly honor, but it was the emblem of his future life, freedom, glory, and perfect felicity, to be enjoyed in heaven. It was "a crown of righteousness," obtained in truth, holiness, and justice, through the obedience and death of Jesus Christ, "the Lord our righteousness." This crown St. Paul knew was "laid up for him;" not now to be provided, but already made and laid up for him, and was perfectly safe, in the cabinet of heaven. Nero might deprive St. Paul of his head, but his crown of righteousness was inviolably secure, which he did not expect to receive as a reward of merit, but as freely *given* to him. No man was ever more filled with self-abasement than this servant of the Lord Jesus; nor was any one more ardently engaged in magnifying the free gifts of grace and glory from the hand of his God. And now, when ready to be offered on the altar of martyrdom, what else could have produced such internal composure and holy triumph, but the prospect of the crown of life as a free and unmerited gift? The hand from whom he should receive his crown, he knew was that of the Lord, "the righteous Judge." Who can this be but Christ the Lord, who is appointed by Jehovah the Father to be the Judge of quick and dead, and who shall judge the world in righteousness? The very Jesus whose hands were nailed to the cross, who

met Saul on his way to Damascus, conferred on his heart the blessings of mercy, and who supported him in the arduous duties of his ministry; the very same blessed hands were now about to place upon his servant's head the crown of righteousness, as the consummation of his immortal blessedness! But at what period shall this honor be conferred? St. Paul says, "at that day." He knew that when absent from the body, he should be present with the Lord, and that there is a day determined when the dead in Christ shall arise to immortality and glory. Therefore we may consider St. Paul as looking forward to what he calls in this verse, "The time of his appearing," for at that time Christ will own his faithful servants, and say unto every one of them, "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

IV. The last article to be explained in this delightful expectation of the apostle is, the additional pleasure he should enjoy that multitudes of others would share with him in the same felicity. "Not to me only, but unto all them that love his appearing." Here the generous heart of this venerable man of God glowed with ardour! It was just and right that he should first rejoice in anticipation of his own felicity; but his cup overflowed. He was competent to trace back the ancient page of sacred history, and bring to his recollection the many patriarchs, prophets, and holy worshippers who served the Lord, died in faith, and were a cloud of witnesses around the

celestial throne of God. Though at this period St. Paul was in the near prospect of death, he could not forget his brethren the apostles, his fellow companions, and the individuals of the churches who proved their discipleship by following his Lord. He could look forward also to succeeding generations, and perceive that all the individuals on earth who should love and serve the Lord, would then share with him a crown of righteousness that should endure for ever. Though he himself was the chief of the apostles, yet he put himself on a level with all others who loved the Lord, let their station, talents, age, sex, or nation, be what they may. It is, however, worthy of observation, that the apostle draws the character with precision—"All that love his appearing;" for certain it is that none will love and long for the appearance of Christ from heaven, but those who love and serve him upon earth. I wish I could enter into the full glow of the apostle's breast, when he expressed this pious sentiment, but it is impossible! I presume it must contain the essence of his experience, his discourses, his writings, and his prayers, concentrated in one point; giving vent to his warmest feelings in favor of those who love the Saviour, to meet and share with him in those honors and sacred delights, when the earth and all its glories shall be hurled into eternal oblivion.

Thus, by the abundant grace of the Lord Jesus, St. Paul commenced, continued, and completed his course as a man, as a Christian, and a minister of the Gospel of our salvation, and is now numbered with the spirits of the just made perfect in the enjoy-

ment of the unbounded felicity of heaven, in the immediate presence of his God and Saviour. How sensibly should these solemn realities impress the mind of the reader, for at our birth we had a course to run, and perhaps we are now rapidly approaching to the end. Bear in remembrance that there are but two ways in which mankind enter into eternity. These are "the narrow way" of grace, truth, and holiness, through Christ Jesus; so called, because "few there be that find it;" and "the wide gate" and "the broad way" of unbelief and sin at which many enter, and "are led to destruction." Matthew vii. 13, 14. Therefore think seriously of the safety of the one, and the danger of the other; for certainly no man, let his profession be what it may, can expect to finish the Christian course with joy, if he has not entered into it by the grace of the Lord Jesus. Let these solemn considerations impress your mind, for nothing is more certain than that our course will speedily terminate.

Having indulged our contemplations on the concluding scenes of St. Paul, the servant of the Lord Jesus, we cannot but bring to recollection, that when Jesus himself, while expiring upon the cross, exclaimed, "It is finished," redemption's work is done; and having so said, "he bowed his head and gave up the ghost." Upon the merit of this finished work of the great Redeemer, St. Paul rested his hope of everlasting salvation; and he too "finished his course" upon earth, while his adorable Lord indulged him with the most animating prospect of receiving

a crown of righteousness in the final day of the resurrection to everlasting life. As Job tells us, "day and night come to an end," so "the end of all flesh shall come;" and St. Peter assures us, that "the end of all things is at hand," and therefore exhorts us, to "be sober, and watch unto prayer." These different periods with persons, events, and things, must take place till the consummation of all things, when the Lord will appear in the brightness of his glory, and justify his ways with the children of men.

The WRITER, under the pressure of feebleness and advanced age, by the goodness of his God, has now reached the conclusion of this volume; and whatever may be the age of the READER, let the contemplation of these serious realities make a suitable impression upon each of our minds on the closing scenes of life. Let us resolve with Job, "All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come." Chap. xiv. 14. And in the meantime, follow the admonition of the Apostle Jude, by "building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." Ver. 20, 21.

"Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever." *Amen.*















